POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED · BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

"WOULD YOU BE SURPRISED TO HEAR?"

(The Cross-Examination of the Tichborne Claimant by Sir John Coleridge.)

Vol. VII. No. 81.

The Tichborne Case.

Or the History of Arthur Orton, alias Thomas Castro, Claimant to the Estates and Baronetcy of Tichborne.

"Let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will
In double knavery."

—SHAKESPEARE, "Othello," Act I., Sc. 3.

PART III.

THE Claimant's friends were now beginning to feel less secure in their position, and prosecuted inquiries for themselves, looking on everybody with suspicion. Thus there were many detectives working in a number of interests. One of the results of these inquiries was the production of the "Stephens letters," which form a separate incident in the case.

We have seen how a mysterious stranger, whom people identified as The Claimant, went down to Wapping on Christmas Day, 1866, and made inquiries for the Orton family. He was given the address of a Mrs. Tredgett, a sister of Arthur Orton. Thither he proceeded on the following morning. Mrs. Tredgett was not at home, but Castro saw a neighbour, Mrs. Pardon, to whom he introduced himself as "William H. Stephens, of Australia." Mrs. Pardon thought that he was an Orton and taxed him with it, but he denied it, saying that Arthur Orton was a very dear friend of his and that he had promised to call on his sister and make inquiries as to her welfare, for that now Arthur was in affluence. He then gave Mrs. Pardon a letter to hand to Mrs. Tredgett. The letter ran as follows:

"Wagga Wagga, New South Wales.
"June 3rd, /66.

"MY DEAR AND BELOVED SISTER,—It many years now since i heard from any of you. I have never heard a word from anyone I knew since 1854. But my friend Mr. Stephens is about starting for England. And he has promised to find you all out and write and let me know all about you. Hoping my dear sister you will make him welcome as he is a dear friend of mine so goodbye.

"ARTHUR ORTON."

The following morning Mrs. Pardon herself received a letter, written in a slightly different hand, asking her to tell Mrs. Tredgett to "commicate" with the writer, when she would hear something to her advantage, and asking for information about a "Miss loder. And her Own family. And what became of her brother Thomas chilldrene." The signature was W. H. Stephens, and instructions were appended for all letters to be addressed "R. C. T., at the Post Office, Gravesend."

There were several other letters in the same handwriting and giving much the same indication of authorship. When these letters came to the knowledge of the gentlemen who were supporting The Claimant with money for his law-suit they held a meeting at the Swan Inn at Alresford, and the majority decided to withdraw their help. The Claimant strenuously denied any knowledge of the letters and was believed by a few of his supporters.

There is no doubt that the Orton family had some hold over The Claimant, for he used to send them money and clothing frequently, but always preserving secrecy about it. As long as he did so they were in his favour, and when Holmes confronted them with The Claimant swore affidavits that they had never seen him before; when, however, funds got low with him and he was unable to pay, they went in a body to the defendant's solicitors and swore a totally different set of affidavits.

After the defection of Holmes the case was taken up for a short time by Messrs. Walter and Moojen, but there was absolutely no money to go on with, and little prospect of getting more from private sources. Something had to be done to provide funds for the battle, and the celebrated "Tichborne Bonds" were issued. The prospectus of the issue of bonds consisted mostly of a selection of affidavits stating that The Claimant was the rightful heir to the estates and title, and the opinion of an eminent barrister was quoted in support of his claim. The bonds themselves were cheaply lithographed and were models of prudence. Here is a copy of one:

"TICHBORNE ESTATE MORTGAGE DEBENTURE.

"Number 470.....£100.

"In consideration of the sum of £100 advanced to me by X. Y., I, the undersigned Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne, at present residing at Harley Lodge, West Brompton, in the County of Middlesex, hereby covenant with the said X. Y., his executors, administrators, and assigns (all of whom are comprised in the expression the said debenture holder) to pay or cause to be paid to the said debenture holder the said sum of £100 on or before the 1st of October, 1870; and in the event of the said principal sum not being paid on the said day, I covenant to pay interest on the same after the rate of £5 per cent. per annum. And for the purpose of securing the repayment of the said principal sum and interest, I hereby charge all and singular my freehold, copyhold, and leasehold estates whatsoever and wheresoever, and all sums of money which I or any person or persons claiming by, through, or under me, may be or become entitled to in respect of rent or arrears of

rent, or income thereof, and all lands, hereditaments, property, estates, and effects of, or to which I am now or may hereafter be entitled or become possessed, whether in possession, expectancy, or reversion, or otherwise, providing that no suit or other proceedings shall be instituted or prosecuted against me by the said debenture holder, unless and until the expiration of one calendar month after I shall have recovered possession of the said property, sums of money, estates, and effects hereinbefore mentioned, or a portion thereof respectively. And provided, further, that inasmuch as this Mortgage Debenture is one of a series of like debentures, numbered respectively 1 to 1,000 inclusive, constituting in the aggregate a sum of £100,000, each of such debentures shall (so far as concerns the charge hereinbefore granted) rank pari passu the one with the other, without any preference the one above the other, by reason of any priority of date or otherwise.

men could not get out of their capital, so a further postponement till May was necessary, but on the 10th of that month the great case was called.

Sir William Bovill, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, was the presiding judge, and the counsel were almost all celebrated men, or men destined to become famous in legal circles. For The Claimant appeared Serjeant Ballantyne, Mr. Hardinge Giffard, now Lord Chancellor and Earl of Halsbury, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Jeune, now President of the Divorce Court, and Mr. Rose, who was then a promising young barrister, but who, unfortunately, died before the case was ended. Opposed to The Claimant was an even more formidable array of learning. Foremost came the Solicitor-General, Sir John Duke Coleridge, who, before the trial ended, rose to be Attorney-General, and as his right-hand man he had Mr. Henry Hawkins, now Lord Brampton; Sir George Honeyman, who afterwards became a judge, was the third advocate; Mr. Chapman Barber, the

A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER . . . WENT DOWN TO WAPPING.

In witness whereof I the said Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne, have hereunto set my hand and seal this..... day of.....

No one can deny that it was an original method of raising money, and it was one which worked well, for The Claimant managed to get rid of very nearly all the precious debentures.

About three months was enough for Messrs. Walter and Moojen, and they retired from the case, which was then taken up by the firm of Baxter, Rose, and Norton, an old-established firm of solicitors, in whom the public had the greatest faith. However rapidly they attempted to press forward the case they were checked by the tedious commissions which were being held in Australia, and the whole of the year 1869 was occupied in obtaining the Australian evidence. At last all seemed ready, and the trial was put down for the Michaelmas sittings of 1870. When the time came, there were several French witnesses who were shut up in Paris, which was then besieged, and so an adjournment till January, 1871, was obtained. Still the French-

authority of the Equity Bar, and Mr. Charles Bowen, on whom devolved the laborious task of keeping the Solicitor-General supplied with facts, completed the fighting team, but several notable barristers held watching briefs for interested parties, the most distinguished being Mr. Henry Matthews, now Lord Llandaff. It has generally been admitted that at no trial has such a display of legal learning been present.

At the very commencement of the trial there was a check; of the number of special jurors called, only three put in an appearance, and it was not till the middle of the following day that sufficient could be got to hear the case, and even then the parties went to trial with eleven jurors.

Serjeant Ballantyne opened the case for the plaintiff. He sketched out the history of Roger Tichborne prior to leaving England, as we know it, and laid no little stress on the deficient education which he had received, while he admitted that The Claimant had forgotten almost all his French, the language of his childhood. The serjeant then attempted to discount Gosford's testimony by saying that he was "an unfaithful steward, apprehensive of having to

disgorge a legacy which he had received under Roger's will, and fearful that The Claimant would compel him to refund certain monies which he had misappropriated." Coming to the document which Roger had left with Gosford, Serjeant Ballantyne challenged the defendants to produce it. No human being but Roger and Gosford knew the contents of the packet, and The Claimant had described its contents. "He challenges its production," thundered the counsel. "He is ready to give evidence with respect to it, and he challenges contradiction by any of the opposite party. Gentlemen, that packet, in my opinion, will never be produced."

From this the counsel rapidly outlined the journey to America and the wreck of the "Bella," and then turned to the evidence of identification. There could be no hesitation concerning the identification by the mother and by Mr. Hopkins, who had lately died, but had left his evidence

Serjeant Ballantyne opens the case for the Plaintiff.

embodied in affidavits. Bogle, Bulpett, Miss Braine, Kate Doughty's governess, all declared that The Claimant was Sir Roger, and he trusted that the jury would believe them. Concerning the Chilian and Australian Commissions, he thought that his opponents had used unfair means to influence the witnesses at the first Commission, and deplored that a sudden severe attack of illness had prevented his client from being present, while the Australian Commission proved conclusively that Arthur Orton and Castro were two persons, and not one, as the defendants stated. "I am not a maker of long speeches nor of ornate perorations," concluded Serjeant Ballantyne, "and I leave the witnesses to tell you their tales themselves." Then he sat down, having spoken for a day and a half.

For two days the court was next occupied in listening to affidavits being read and papers proved and put in in evidence, and then the living witnesses for the plaintiff were called. In all thirty-one persons had been subpœnaed by the plaintiff, and they were not taken in any fixed order, it appearing that one of Ballantyne's tactics was to prevent any but general impressions of the plaintiff's identity being gained, and to make that impression override any adverse criticism which the defendants might bring about.

Though the lawyers did not classify their witnesses for the benefit of the jury, we may divide them into three sections. First, the plaintiff himself; next, witnesses to prove that he was Roger Tichborne, who may be sub-divided into civilian and military witnesses; and, lastly, witnesses to prove that he was not Arthur Orton. If the second class of witnesses bore out the plaintiff's own story, then there would be no need to produce the last class, and, as a matter of fact, Serjeant Ballantyne did not call them, but reserved the right to do so if the defendants produced rebutting evidence.

In his opening speech counsel promised to put Roger Tichborne in the box, but day by day went by, and still comparatively unimportant people were being examined in preference to the hero of the day, so we must follow the same plan, and keep the story of "Sir Roger" in abeyance for a short time.

Five officers were first called. They all swore that they believed The Claimant to be the baronet, but could not give any very clear reasons for their belief. Colonel Norbury first saw "Sir Roger" at Malvern, and talked with him for three hours. He was struck by the acquaintance which he showed with members of the regiment as it was constituted in 1852. It was quite possible, he admitted, for Carter, as an officer's servant, to have known all the things about which the plaintiff spoke. This knowledge, added to The Claimant's voice, had convinced him that he was the real Roger Tichborne. Major Heywood was influenced solely by the plaintiff's remembrance of a practical joke, which had been played on him when the regiment was at Cahir. The whole regiment knew of the joke, and it was freely spoken about. General Custance and Captain Sherstone relied on the features of The Claimant. They both admitted that he was very much altered, but they believed that he was Roger Tichborne. Colonel Sawyer at first thought that The Claimant was an impostor, but when he had spoken to him for some time he was convinced that he was really the ex-dragoon, because he remembered that one of his horses had bolted and killed his servant. Mr. Hawkins, who cross-examined the colonel, pointed out to him that that incident was contained in Carter's affidavit, which the plaintiff had had in his possession some months prior to his interview with him.

A string of non-commissioned officers and men followed their officers. Their evidence was all to the same effect. They had been told that Sir Roger was very much altered, and would not have recognised him but for his voice or for some incident of which he spoke to them. One man, McCann, said that he recognised Sir Roger by his ears; there was nothing particularly curious about his ears, but he recognised them as he had seen them many times!

But the pick of the military witnesses was Carter, formerly the servant of Roger. We have said that he was taken into The Claimant's service, but when his brains had been picked bare he was discharged on the plea that he drank. His examination-in-chief only lasted a minute or two, for it was purely formal; but the cross-examination by Mr. Hawkins was a thing of joy to the younger members of the Bar. Among other things Mr. Hawkins asked him:

"Now, did you not say that there was nothing but damned bribery from the commencement of the case?"

"I do not know, sir."

"You do know, and you must say so. Did you make that statement?"

"I may have, but I could not swear it."

"Did you say that you and McCann were the means of getting the officers to recognise the plaintiff?"

"I cannot swear it."

"Is your affidavit correct? Is it true?"

"No."

"You can stand down."

The soldier witnesses were succeeded by a number of civilians who had sworn to Castro's identity with Roger

Tichborne. None of their evidence was irrefutable. Perhaps the best of them was Mr. Biddulph, who was at first inclined to think that The Claimant was an impostor, but said that when he had had a conversation with him he was fully satisfied that he was his cousin, and had accepted him as such. He had told him of a visit the pair of them paid to Bath, of certain death's-head pipes which Roger used to smoke, of a particular ride they had both taken, and several other matters of a like nature. When cross-examined, the witness admitted that he had mentioned to other people the tests he was going to put to the plaintiff, and that it was quite possible that he had been prepared for his visit. His manner at table was that of a gentleman, but he had some peculiarities of speech.

Miss Braine followed this witness. She described The Claimant as "Two men"; the old Roger Tichborne appeared as if floating over the huge man who came in. When she had been convinced that The Claimant was Roger Tichborne, she had taken up letters were falling about. The witness pulled himself together, and said that he could not swear that it was so. Pressed, he admitted that he did remember someone at Tichborne who was tattooed, but could not say whether the initials were the letters "R. C. T." or whether they were on Roger's arm.

When the trial had lasted for twelve days, the jury began to get tired of the monotonous evidence which was being produced, and called on Serjeant Ballantyne to keep his promise, and put the plaintiff in the box. Then for the first time the public caught sight of the mysterious man who had occupied so much of their attention for so many years. His examination-in-chief was undertaken by Mr. Hardinge Giffard, who extracted the following account of his wanderings from him:

He spent five weeks at Valparaiso, went thence to Callao, and on to Lima; after this he went to Santiago, and, finding that the coasting steamer which he wished to take was not ready for sea, went to Melipilla, and stayed

THEY WERE PICKED UP BY THE "OSPREY."

her residence with him for some time, and had helped him with his correspondence. She had educated reasons for all his mistakes in spelling and pronunciation, and greatly amused the court by explaining that "mountaynious" was really a corruption of the French "montagne"; "familyar" identical with "familiar"; "anchoring" for "hankering," due to a misconception of the French word "ancre," but that the word "worrat," of which "Sir Roger" was very fond, was a "pure Colonialism"!

More witnesses told almost identical stories, and then Dr. Lipscombe, the Alresford doctor, was called. He had attended Roger several times before he left England, and had been in constant attendance on The Claimant since his return. Making due allowance for all that he had been told, and for the effects of long residence in hot climates, he was sure that the plaintiff was Sir Roger. Then a new note was struck. The doctor was suddenly asked if he did not remember Roger Tichborne having a device tattooed on his arm, with certain initials under it, and whether he had not laughingly remarked that whoever did the tattooing must have been drunk, since all the

for three weeks with Tomas Castro; then back to Valparaiso, and across the Cordilleras to Rio.

At the last port he found the ship "Bella," Captain Birkett, about to sail for New York, and he took a passage in her, he being the only passenger. The crew numbered sixteen. On the fourth day out the mate reported to the captain that there were twelve feet of water in the hold, and that the vessel was filling fast. All on board instantly took to the boats, the captain and mate getting into one boat with all the stores and the navigating implements, and he going in the second boat, with eight sailors. The captain ordered the second boat to keep in sight of his own, so that he could direct them; but on the second night a violent storm arose, and the two parted company. After drifting for four days, they were picked up by the "Osprey," Captain Lewis Owen, or Owen Lewis. He was in a very exhausted state, as he had been employed for four days baling out water from the bottom of the boat with a preserved meat tin. He was ill on board the "Osprey" till she reached Melbourne, which was at the end of July, 1854. During the four days he

had been on the "Bella" he was drunk the whole time. On the day he first landed in Melbourne, he and the captain made inquiries concerning getting him a passage to England, but without result. On the following day he

A bit of Tichborne Park, Alresford.

went into an auction-yard, where some horses were being offered for sale, and there met Mr. William Foster, an extensive stock-keeper of Gippsland, who took him with him to his farm. For family reasons he changed his name to Tomas Castro.

Immediately on leaving Melbourne he went to Boisdale with Mr. Foster. When he had been there for about eighteen months he met Arthur Orton for the first time. Orton was a stock-rider, and was in charge of the Dargo station, about 115 miles farther inland. He was about an inch and a-half taller than himself, and had large hands and very red eyes. Also he was slightly pitted with small-pox. He and Orton became very friendly, and eventually he succeeded Orton at Dargo. Then Orton went away, and he did not see him again for some time till he met him at Myers Flat, one of the suburbs of the Bendigo diggings. Orton changed his name at that time to Alfred Smith. He met him again at Wagga Wagga, and they were both employed by Mr. Higgins, the butcher, for a short time. When The Claimant left Wagga Wagga for Sydney, Orton was still there, and on the day when he had made his will in Mr. Gibbes's office, Orton was waiting outside and had been presented with £50. It was at Wagga Wagga that he first saw Lady Tichborne's advertisement. It was shown him by a Hampshire man named Slate, who had probably heard him mention Hampshire in conversation, and thought it might interest him.

The Brighton card incident to which he referred in his first letter to his mother was one of the escapades of his youth. He was then in the Carabineers, and had gone down to Brighton for a few days. There he met three strangers, named Broome, Robin, and Ecclestone, and played cards with them. He lost, and found that he owed them £1,500, whereas he had only about £100 to his credit at the time. In his straits, he had applied to his mother, who managed to let him have £500, with which he was able to settle his debt; at the same time he had to promise her never to play cards again. He did not think that any of the family knew of the incident, but was not certain.

Before he went abroad he had given a sealed packet to Mr. Gosford. He could repeat the contents of the packet, but there were very strong reasons why he should not do so.

That was the story as Mr. Giffard extracted it in its entirety for the first time, and it took two and a-half days to finish the examination-in-chief. Then came the moment for which the defendants had been waiting for so many years.

The Solicitor-General took the cross-examination of the plaintiff into his own hands. He first of all dealt with the will which The Claimant had made at Wagga Wagga. Did he know that none of the property bequeathed in it had ever belonged to the Tichborne family? Yes, the plaintiff knew that perfectly well. And had he forgotten that his mother's name was Henriette Félicité, and not Hannah Frances? No; he knew perfectly well what he was doing. He knew that he could not get any money from the lawyer or from the bank unless he made his will first, so he just trumped up any kind of a will to suit the purpose.

"Then the plaintiff admits, gentlemen," went on Sir John Coleridge, "that he obtained the money at Sydney under false pretences. Is that the act of an officer and a gentleman?" Then the counsel pointed out to him that the names of the executors to the will were friends of Arthur Orton's father. Did he know that? The plaintiff said that he did not, but that Arthur had suggested the names to him.

"Where is Arthur Orton now?" was the next question.

"I do not know."

"Are you sure he is not in this court?"

"He may be for aught I know; it would puzzle me to see all who are here."

The arrival of the Claimant at the Court.

"Did you go to Wapping on the first night after you arrived in England?"

"Yes. I went to make inquiries about Arthur's father at an address which he gave me on a piece of paper."

Getting into his stride, the Solicitor-General commenced

on the Brighton card case. When did it occur? he asked. The plaintiff replied that it was in August, September, or October, 1852.

"Would you be surprised to hear that in that year Broome and his two companions were prosecuted for swindling a man named Hamp out of £1,500, just the amount you lost?"

"They may have been. I never heard of it."

Again the counsel scored, for he produced the evidence taken before the Australian Commission, which proved that Castro was frequently talking about the Broome case while at Wagga Wagga.

It was at the end of July or the beginning of August, 1852, that the plaintiff first noticed that his attentions to Miss Kate Doughty were not acceptable to her father. The last time he saw her was at the end of October that year, at the lower end of Tichborne Village, as they were returning from hunting. He then promised to marry her if she was single when he returned from abroad. He told her the contents of the sealed packet which he had given to Gosford, but he did not give her a copy of it.

"You say in your affidavit that you gave the sealed packet to Gosford which related to your cousin, and told him that he was only to open it under certain circumstances, one of which you knew had not happened and the other you hoped had not. What were those circumstances?"

The plaintiff wriggled a good deal, and refused for a long time to mention either of the circumstances, but the counsel would not be put off. He would take them one at a time. What was the event which had not happened? That seemed a harmless enough question, but it took a good twenty minutes to coax the plaintiff to admit that his own death was the event which had not happened. Then what was the event which he hoped had not happened? Motives of delicacy and chivalry prevented him from mentioning it. It was not material to the case, and he begged the court to excuse him replying. But that would not do for the Solicitor-General.

"You have made an abominable charge against your cousin—Mrs. Radcliffe—and that charge has reached the ears of the public. How, I do not know, but it has become public. My learned friend Serjeant Ballantyne has made the knowledge of the contents of the packet a clinching proof of your identity, and your spurious chivalry, your manly delicacy, shall not be a refuge for you to hide behind. More than this, Mrs. Radcliffe, with her husband, is in this court, and my instructions are imperative to drag this filthy slander into the open light and thus give her an opportunity of denying it on oath, an opportunity she has waited long and trying years for. I repeat the question again, What is the event you hoped had not happened?"

"The confinement of my cousin."

"Do you mean to swear before the judge and jury that you seduced this lady?"

"I most solemnly to my God swear I did."

There was a murmur of disgust at this startling announcement, and people regarded the Claimant as a libertine and a disreputable character; but curiously enough, this very proof of his vileness was taken as proof positive of his identity, for, argued the public, no impostor would make a statement which must prejudice the right-thinking people against him. But there was a surprise in store for The Claimant. Several papers were handed up to him, and he said that they were all in his handwriting. The first was the copy of the vow to build the church at Tichborne which Roger had given to his cousin unknown to Gosford; the second was the letter to Gosford in which he referred to the sealed packet; and the third and fourth were his own vile statements of what the packet contained. These were all read to the jury, and they were told that the packet destroyed by Gosford was identical with the first document. The Solicitor General made no further comment on that passage of arms at that time.

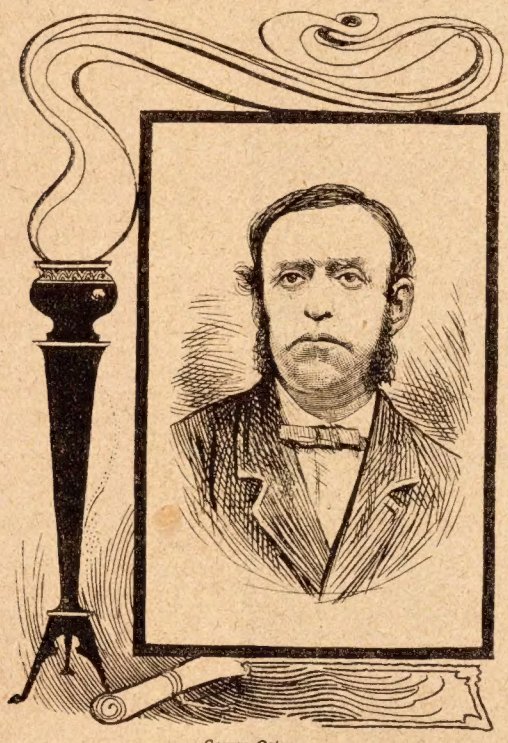
THE CLAIMANT.
(From photo taken during the trial.

A more amusing aspect of the case was now to be revealed. The early life and education of the real Roger Tichborne became the subject of examination. The plaintiff remembered M. Chatillon as his tutor in Paris, but could not recall a single book he had read with him. On M. Jolivalt being mentioned, the successor of Chatillon, The Claimant said that he was a fellow-pupil of his, and that they used to play together. From the ignorance displayed by The Claimant we should be inclined to think that his tutors must all have played with him.

A long, and rather scholarly criticism of Chateaubriand's tale of René was next read to him, and he astounded the court by saying that it was an extract from the life of Saint Nicholas. He had forgotten all his French,

he said, having abandoned it for "Castilian," which he had learnt in South America. He had also forgotten the rudiments of Paris geography, and got hopelessly mixed up about the whereabouts of his parents' houses in the "Gay City." One thing, however, he did remember, and told the jury of it with pride. He distinctly remembered the view of the Hôtel du Louvre from the windows of his father's house in the Rue St. Honoré. This was strange, for the Louvre was not built till some years after Roger went to South America, and the Solicitor-General kindly pointed this out to him, commencing his correction with his oft-quoted phrase, "Would you be surprised to learn that . . . "

The next subject to be used as a rack was his sojourn at Stonyhurst. The plaintiff, when asked where he lived when he was attending the celebrated Jesuit College, said that he had occupied one of the cottages alongside the college. Then he mentioned the word "quadrangle," and was pressed for its meaning. He hung back for some time and then said that it was a staircase or some part of a building.



George Orton.

Attached to Stonyhurst is the Seminary, a block of buildings by itself, where the "Philosophers" lived, and in which Roger had been located when a student.

"Do you remember living in the Seminary?" asked the counsel.

"I never lived in a cemetery," was the startling reply.

Then his description of the classes, of which there were seven in the college, was entertaining.

"How many classes were there at Stonyhurst?" commenced his tormentor.

"Two, I think, the first and the second."

"Would you be surprised to learn that there were seven?"

"There were only two sets of students."

"And they were called?"

"The Philosophers, to whom I belonged, and the Laity, who were studying for the Church. There were about 150 Philosophers."

"Would you be surprised to learn that there have never been more than twenty Philosophers at Stonyhurst at the same time?"

Asked what he studied while there, he said that he attended classes in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Hebrew and Greek he had forgotten entirely, but he believed that he went as far as learning the alphabet! He was not quite certain, but he thought he had got so far. He was sure that he had learnt the Latin alphabet.

"And I suppose you have read Cæsar?" queried Sir John. The plaintiff was not quite certain, and when pressed said that perhaps he had, but could not now remember if it was in Latin or Greek, or whether it was written in prose or poetry.

"Well, here is something that you will remember," said the counsel as he handed him a copy of Virgil's Æneid. "You have read that, I suppose?"

"I do not know."

"What language is it written in?"

"I am not quite sure. Greek, I think."

"Should you be surprised to learn that it is in Latin and is read in the sixth class at Stonyhurst?"

When the laughter had subsided a little the tormentor went on:

"Now when you were at Stonyhurst you studied Euclid, did you not?"

"Yes, I read him."

"Had the book anything to do with mathematics?"

"No, certainly not."

"Should you be surprised to learn that it is the basis of mathematics."

"No, it isn't."

"Well, do you remember the Pons Asinorum?" (The fifth problem in the first book of Euclid. So called because it looks like a bridge, and is the first difficulty the beginner meets. Most boys fail to learn it the first time and so it is called the "Asses' Bridge.")

"No, I do not."

"What? Have you not heard of the Asses' Bridge?"

"Oh, yes."

"What is it?"

"A bridge near the college."

"How far away is it?"

"Cannot say. Not far." At this there was a roar of laughter, and the witness turned angrily on the counsel and told him not to insult him.

One could multiply these ridiculous incidents all day but space only permits us to give one more sample of "Roger's" erudition. On all the walls at Stonyhurst, at the head and foot of every exercise, over the great door, on the plates used at meals are blazoned the letters A.M.D.G. and L.D.S. "Do you know what these letters mean—what they stand for?" asked Sir John Coleridge.

"No, I have forgotten."

"Would you be surprised to learn that A.M.D.G. stands for Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam?"

"Undoubtedly it does, and the last two words mean 'God's Glory.'"

"And you have heard that L.D.S. mean Laus Deo Semper?" (Praise to God for ever.)

"Oh, yes. It means, 'The Laws of God for ever, or permanently,'" was the answer which convulsed judge, jury, and bar.

He failed to recognise the photographs of the houses where as a boy Roger had spent his holidays, and could not read a letter which Roger had written to the dowager in French. Asked what he studied for the Army he said that he had been taught fortifications, which he explained to mean "The landmarks of England; it insinuates the formation of the points round the coast." Of drill, Vauban and the Queen's Regulations he had never heard.

The Solicitor-General then took him over the story of Arthur Orton, as we know it, and on oath he denied that any of the incidents in it related to him. He was particularly eager in denying that he had ever told a fellow-passenger when on his way to England that he had been frightened as a child by a house on fire and had had St. Vitus's Dance in consequence, though that is exactly what had happened to the Orton child.

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER LX.

WE must now return to Charles Peace, who, probably many of our readers may think has been left too long unnoticed; but it will be remembered that we left him in good hands. He was well looked after, and month after month wore sadly away, until at length the time approached upon which Peace was to regain his liberty. Discharges take place in various ways, but Peace was not at all particular about the method or manner of the liberation, provided he left the cheerless walls of Dartmoor.

Men when they leave prison should have every possible inducement for them to return to an honest course of life.

The prisoner who goes to the Prisoners' Aid Society in London is not compelled to accept the clothes which the gaol officials provide. Peace, however, did not belong to any society of this nature.

When he was discharged from Dartmoor he had, therefore, no alternative than to leave the prison in the clothes furnished him by the authorities.

When he was about to leave he was informed by the governor that a letter had reached the prison, which was addressed to him. It contained an enclosure (a Bank of England note for twenty pounds).

The letter was singularly short and ambiguous. It was as follows:

"Accept the enclosed from an old friend and companion. Turn from your evil courses, and take heed of the future."

Peace was surprised at the contents of the epistle, and still more so at the enclosure. He could not divine from whom it had come. At first he was under the impression that Lord Ethalwood had sent it, but upon second consideration he dismissed the thought from his mind. The earl would not have been so secret—there was no reason for his being so.

It must have been sent by some friend; possibly Laura Stanbridge had forwarded him the amount, which was, of course, most welcome and acceptable.

In this, however, he was mistaken. The letter and enclosure had been forwarded by his quondam companion, Bessie Dalton, who had, however, at this time changed her name as well as her mode of life.

Peace was, as a matter of course, greatly delighted at being so suddenly and unexpectedly put in possession of the sum, which would suffice for his more immediate necessaries.

He asked one of the warders if he could get the note changed for him before leaving Dartmoor. The warder mentioned the matter to the governor, who gave Peace gold for the note.

And shortly after this he bade farewell to his prison associates, and was conducted with several others to the station by two warders.

The notion that prevails at the English Home Office is that a discharged prisoner's best chance is to obtain a situation under false pretences.

That he could never obtain employment if his felonious antecedents were known, and that his dismissal from any place he had procured under a false character would be the immediate result of their discovery, is taken for granted; and, perhaps, while the English convict prisons remain what they are, and the public distrust of their reformatory power continues in consequence unabated, this belief is well grounded.

It is probably true, therefore, that the acknowledged ticket-of-leave and the avowed police surveillance might possibly impede a man's return to honesty.

As far as Peace was concerned, however, it was a matter of no moment.

He had numberless opportunities afforded him to pursue an honest course of life, but it was not in his nature to be otherwise than a hardened criminal.

There is no question about this, albeit his character in other ways is of a most indefinite and contradictory nature.

Though Peace has given evidence of having a thorough contempt for human suffering, it is asserted that "he could not kill a mouse" if he had been requested to do so. He further declared that if he had to kill his meat he should have to go without it all his life.

He regularly visited the Museum, and as each addition was made to it he inspected the new object of interest with care. Anything with carving upon it came in for a large share of his attention. But he revelled among the models most, and if there was one branch more than another in which he excelled it was the making of models of cathedrals and monuments in cardboard, which he embossed and traced with a variety of patterns. There is one at the present time in Sheffield—a memento of the deaths of four members of his family.

As a specimen of workmanship, it is without equal in its line in Yorkshire.

After receiving his discharge Peace made the best of his way to London. One reason for this was that he was not so well known in the metropolis as at Sheffield, and before returning to his native town he was desirous of making a change in his costume; the other reason was that he had for his companions two convicts who were discharged at the same time as himself. One of these was the housebreaker who had been convicted at Manchester for burglary; the other was a regular London thief whose acquaintance Peace had made in the parade ground of Dartmoor. The last-named was a cheery, gossiping gentleman, who appeared to be on good terms with himself and everybody else.

"Well, we've all done our dose," said the London thief, whose name was Baxter, "and are glad enough to leave that blooming place. I hope neither on us 'ill see its dark walls again, and bad luck to it. I think it's the worst prison as ever I was in. Why, Millbank's a king to it."

"Ah! I never was at Millbank," said Peace.

"Oh, no, s'pose not; you ain't a London man, and maybe that this is your first lagging."

He was very communicative to Peace and Raynton, the three companions in crime being the only occupants of the carriage.

"Well, old man," said Raynton, "you'll be a little more careful how you 'sling your hook' after this dose, I expect."

"I shall be as careful as possible, but, lor' bless ye, a cove may be as careful and artful as blazes, but he's bound to be 'pinched' sooner or later. Can't be helped, it's part of the business."

"That's right enough," remarked Peace; "but what places do you work as a general rule?"

"I used to do all sorts of places, but my 'lay' lately has been chiefly in the churches or chapels. I used to tog myself up in black with a white 'squeeze' on Sunday, and go to two or three different places of worship. I dare say you'll be a little surprised when I tell ye that I've 'eard all the crack preachers in London, and, except when the May meetings were on at Exeter Hall, I never went crooked any other day but Sunday. I used to do a bit in the smashing line; that was when I had a clever partner—but she's dead and gone now."

The conversation was presently brought to an end, or rather turned into a different channel by two passengers who entered the carriage upon the arrival of the train at the next station.

Upon the three discharged prisoners reaching the metropolis they repaired to the nearest and most inviting-looking hostelry about. They drank each other's health in a most cordial and convivial manner, which was quite touching to behold.

Mr. Baxter was most profuse in his protestations of friendship and good fellowship, and said he hoped as how they were not going to part for good and for all, but that he hoped to meet them, not on the Rialto, but at some of the accustomed haunts where gentlemen of his profession were wont to congregate. Peace and Raynton both declared that they hoped to have the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Baxter on a future occasion.

That gentleman thereupon said that he might be able to put them up to a dodge or two, and that if he could it would afford him great pleasure to be of any service to both of them.

At length they succeeded in shaking him off.

Peace and Raynton walked on together for some little distance—they were chums or cronies who understood each other pretty well; a sort of friendship, if it could be dignified by such a term, had sprung up between them.

"Which way are you going?" said Raynton, "eastwards or westwards?"

"Westwards," returned Peace.

"Ah, just so, the very opposite direction to the one I am about to take. Well, old man, we've borne our 'prisonment together, and have been on pretty good terms, all things considered. I suppose you are like myself, not quite certain as to your future course of action, but I suppose you don't mean to turn me up—cast me on one side now that you are a free man?"

"Certainly not, Raynton, far from that."

"Well, then, before we part I'll just give you my address, or rather one where a letter will be sure to reach me. If you do write, be careful how you word it, for I've a wife and two kids to look after, and it's as well to keep the missus in the dark as to where we first met."

"All right," returned Peace, "you needn't be afraid of my saying anything—that is, anything you don't want me to say."

Peace, as we have already seen, had ample means at his command for his immediate wants. He now began to reflect a little, that he might determine how to shape his course. He glanced at the suit of clothes which had been furnished him; then he shook his head. He did not like them, and the first thing, therefore, was to get a new rig out.

He walked rapidly on in the direction of a new and second-hand clothes shop, kept by a gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion.

He knew the shop perfectly well; it was about a mile from the spot where he had parted with Raynton.

"I want a suit—a regular rig out," said Peace; "and you must give me what you can for the suit I've got on."

Peace tried on one garment after another until he succeeded in finding one that fitted him. The same process had to be gone through with trousers and vest, for the accomplishment of which he was conducted into the private room.

"There," cried the Jew, in a tone of triumph, "you look quite the gentleman."

"Stow that! I don't want any of your gammon," cried Peace. "I'm not going to give you three pounds ten for duffing things like these, so don't you think it."

"S'help me goodness they were never made for the money!" said the Israelite. "I shan't get five shillings out of the bargain. No, I wouldn't deceive you, not five shillings."

"I'll take two pounds fifteen—there!"

Peace buttoned up his coat, looked at himself in the glass, and felt that he cut a respectable figure; so, without further haggling, he gave the Jew the required sum and strode into the shop.

"You look all the gentleman except——"

"Except what?" exclaimed Peace freely. "None of your nonsense. Except what?"

"The hat."

"Ah, that's true. Have you got one?"

"Yes. A pot hat or a pilly-cock?"

"A pot hat."

When Peace was fitted with a hat he strode out of the shop with all the airs and graces of a man of fashion.

CHAPTER LXI.

Alf Purvis, who was driven from Stoke Ferry Farm with the hare round his neck, had now grown up to a slim, handsome young man, with an almost feminine cast of features.

His education was by this time completed. His instructor and trainer, Laura Stanbridge, in conjunction with her lawless associates, had transformed the country lad into one of the most expert and daring young London thieves of the period. Alf was lost, irretrievably lost, and no one who knew him at the farm-house could recognise him as the boy who gave such trouble to Mr. Jamblin. He was so completely metamorphosed, personally as well as mentally.

We have had, during the progress of this work, occasion to give the reader some little insight into the lives and careers of juvenile and adult pickpockets. Alf Purvis was the most accomplished one of the whole fraternity. He had a certain amount of education, was quick-witted, aristocratic in his appearance, and was, therefore, a dangerous person to let loose on society. He had, moreover, for his accomplice a woman, even more dangerous than himself—a sort of harpy or beautiful demon.

Alf Purvis frequented places of fashionable resort, and had the faculty of obtaining an entrance to select coteries in a manner which was altogether unaccountable. He was, in short, the George Barrington of his day. His manners were so soft and winning that he was able to deceive and hoodwink his betters.

It is terrible to think of the change which had come over the farmer's boy.

Let us pay a visit to the house at the back of Regent Street. It was one of those hours of the night in which honest folk are asleep, and fools revel, and thieves work.

Algernon Sutherland, alias Alf Purvis, was alone in the little parlour. He appeared to be perfectly at his ease and utterly indifferent to the position of his companion in crime or the dangers which beset them both.

"Bah!" he ejaculated, taking a choice Havana from his cigar-case.

He lighted his cigar and puffed therefrom thin wreaths of vapoury smoke.

Laura Stanbridge entered the room. She wore a moire-antique dress which displayed to advantage her bust and hands white as Parian marble.

It was evident that she had made a careful toilette, for her attire was of the best and in excellent taste. The grey-eyed young man was not accustomed to be taken by surprise or give expression to his emotions, if he had any, in a demonstrative manner; still, he did just raise his eyebrows and honour his female companion with an inquiring glance as she re-entered the room.

He acknowledged to himself that she was very beautiful, but round her eyes and mouth there were lines and wrinkles unnaturally deepened by the life of anxiety which she had led.

Nevertheless, all things considered, she looked well, and was by no means a faded beauty, albeit the bloom had in a measure left the peach.

"Alf dear," she said, walking towards him, "I have something to say to you—a few words concerning my own happiness."

"Indeed! Well, to begin with, I must inform you that I am no longer Alf Purvis, the farmer's boy, from Stoke Ferry Farmhouse. Nothing of the sort, my dear. I am Algernon Sutherland."

"Of course, I know that; but, in speaking to one who has been so long my pet, I addressed him by his real name—don't you see?"

"Oh, I see!" returned the young gentleman, puffing carelessly at his cigar. "But, my dear girl, you ought to know—but of course you do—that there is nothing real in the existence of a thief; it is as ephemeral as that of butterflies, ladybirds, and other poetical insects. I have changed my name, as I have changed my habits, my language, my associations, and my honesty."

Mr. Algernon Sutherland took two or three more long and vigorous puffs at his cigar, which had been trying to go out under cover of his eloquence.

"I will call you what you wish," she answered in a gentle manner and tone of voice, "if you will only listen to what I am going to say."

"All right, Lorry; say what you like. I will listen complacently enough, and, of course, if it concerns yourself, I will promise to be deeply interested. Can I say fairer than that?" he added with a chuckle.

"Get away, do, with your nonsense! You do love to be satirical; but that is little to the purpose. You spoke of changing, Alf—for I still cling to the name by which I have known you so long—and that very word has strengthened me in my determination."

"Your determination—eh!"

"Yes."

"And what might that be—to reform? I hope you are not about to meet me with a long moral dissertation upon the past, the present, and the future?"

"And if I did, there would not be much harm in such a discourse. If I did wish to make reparation for the past by a brighter and less guilty future, there would be nothing to be astonished at."

"Oh, wouldn't there?" he remarked carelessly.

"No, of course not!"

"Well, go on; fire away."

"Alf, I have been a thief ever since I can remember," said his companion; "and, oh! how I bitterly repent the crimes

which others taught me! How sincerely I desire to atone for them by a life of virtue and repentance!"

She buried her face in her hands. Sutherland, as he now termed himself, withdrew the cigar from his mouth and indulged in a sarcastic smile. To say he was astonished would, perhaps, be making use of too strong a term. He was a young man who was not easily astonished—but he was amused.

His companion proceeded:

"Thus, you see, Alf," said she, "that few have had more experience in theft than myself, and few have had such success."

"I should say very few."

"Very few indeed. I have never been in prison; I am rich; I have had nothing to discourage me, and if it were possible for a thief to be happy I ought to be so. But I am not; I am supremely miserable."

"You surprise me! Not happy?"

"No, far from it."

"Umph!" muttered Algernon, "this is an entirely new line of business, preaching morality. Well, I am prepared to entertain the question. What do you propose?"

She placed her white hands upon his shoulders and her lips upon his cheek.

"Might we not marry, dear Algernon?" she said, in soft, beseeching tones. "How happy I should then be! We would travel on the Continent, give up all our old associates, and lead a new life. We would see all the grand sights in the world, and after that," she added, in a voice hushed as a sigh, as melodious as a song, "we would retire to some quiet nook in the country, and there dwell in delicious solitude. Say, dearest, if I may hope for this happiness?"

Her gliding step, her glittering eyes, her fragrant but fiery breath as she approached, made her resemble a serpent which uncoils itself to spring.

He shuddered in spite of himself.

Then he rose, and exclaimed in a voice of thunder:

"Marriage! And you can give utterance to that word as applied to our two selves?"

"Ah!" she cried, as she clenched her hands and recoiled a few steps, "what is the cause of this outburst?"

"You have told me your history," returned he, recovering his sang froid and lighting a fresh cigar at the dying ashes of his first. "Permit me to relate to you the history of another young lady, for I feel assured that you will find it wondrously interesting. Indeed, it is altogether so romantic that it would appear to many persons quite incredible, but it is correct in every particular, so I have been given to understand. The tale is so instructive that it becomes an actual warning to all who might by chance be acquainted with its heroine. Her name was Margaret Oughton."

The woman uttered a horrible cry. Algernon Sutherland closed his eyes and allowed the smoke to curl voluptuously from between his lips.

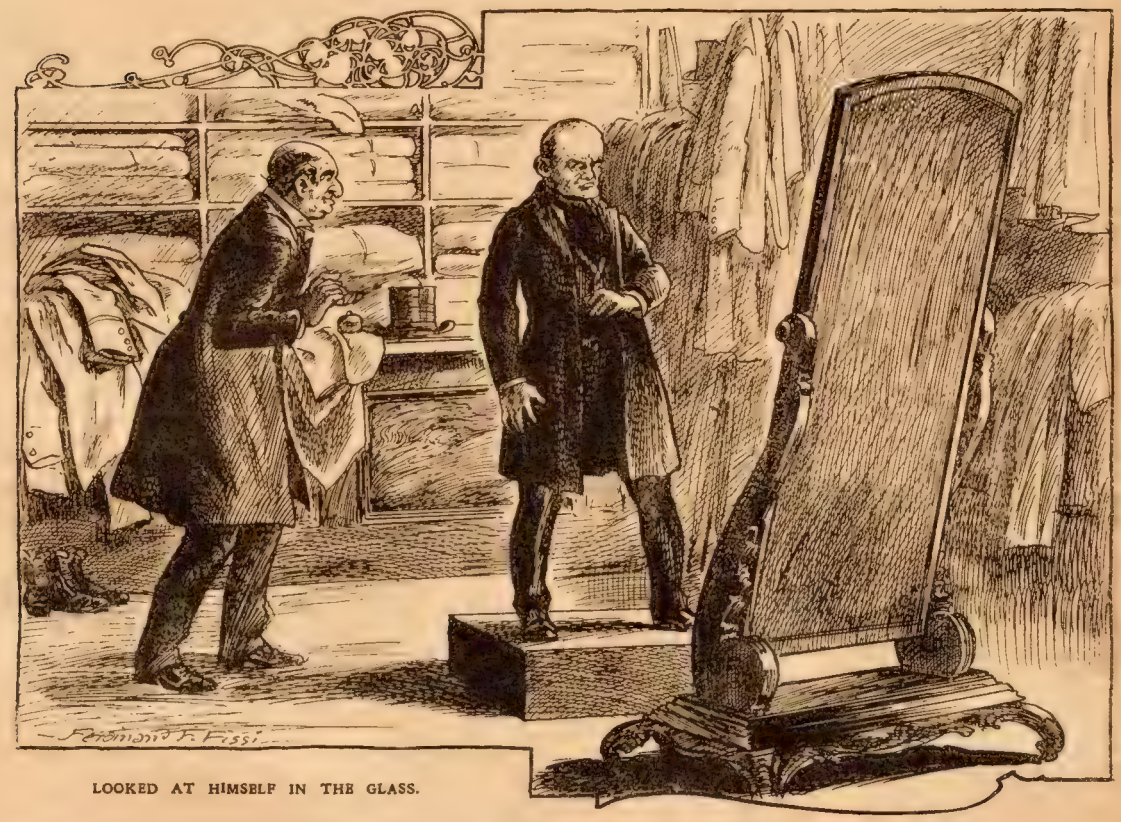
"Her name was Margaret Oughton. She was the daughter of a cotton operative. When she left her native town she met with a gentleman in London who was struck with her beauty. He feared to marry her. The reason for this—or rather one of the reasons—was that he was old and she was very young. Poor man, he was wondrously smitten with the fair young creature, who told him, with embraces, that she loved him. He was vain, and therefore believed her. He believed those embraces to be pure, which were as meretricious as those of a fille-de-joie.

"He married her, and before a month had passed away he found that she had a lover. He ought not to have been astonished at this, and the probability is that he was brought to look upon it as a very natural sequence; anyway, he forgave her. In return this angelic young wife robbed him of every farthing she could lay her hands on and eloped with her lover."

"I was his tool—a mere puppet in his hands. I was at his mercy; he made me do it. I had no power to refuse!" cried Laura Stanbridge.

"Liar and murderess! That man, your partner in vice, your accomplice in crime, was discovered lying in the high road, his face covered with frightful spots, and all the signs of death by poisoning within his frame. Therefore, my dear Lorry, since I have no ambition to play Duncan to your Lady Macbeth, or to have my tea sugared with arsenic any morning that you happened to sit down to breakfast in a bad temper, I politely decline your kind offer."

She looked at him calmly for a moment, gave a low moan, and fell like a corpse upon the floor.



LOOKED AT HIMSELF IN THE GLASS.

He surveyed her with the inquisitive look of a prize-fighter who wishes to see what effect his "punishment" has had upon his adversary—a look in which sympathy is the least ingredient.

"Ah!" he murmured thoughtfully, "a knock-down blow—not with the fist, but with hard words. Well, this appears to be genuine, and, I suppose, must be attended to."

He poured out some brandy in a wine-glass and knelt down by the side of the prostrate woman. He forced some brandy into her mouth, which he made her swallow. It seemed to revive her, for she opened her eyes and sighed.

I write "seemed," for Laura Stanbridge had only pretended to faint in order that she might gain time to think.

She had been studying a part while she had been lying prostrate on the ground.

She made an effort to rise, and then groaned. Her companion placed his arms round her waist and raised her to her feet. Then, with one arm round her, he held her in a half-fainting condition.

It so chanced that at this particular crisis Peace, who had been let in by the servant-girl, gave a rap at the half-open door of the little parlour, and not receiving any answer thereto, he entered without further ceremony.

He beheld Laura Stanbridge in the arms of a fashionably-dressed, genteel-looking young man, and felt that he had intruded at a mal-apropos time.

"Beg pardon!" cried Peace; "didn't know you were engaged!"

"Oh, come in!" said Algernon; "the lady's better now."

"Bless me! Fainting fit, I suppose! How very sad!"

He took a tumbler off the sideboard, half-filled with water, with which he moistened the forehead and temples of his old playmate.

"That will do; I am all right. Why, it's dear old Charlie!" she ejaculated, catching sight of the well-known features of Peace. "Well, I am glad to see you—oh, so very glad! The sight of you has quite restored me. Sit down, Charlie."

"But you," inquired Peace, "how do you find yourself now?"

"Oh, better. I'm all right. Don't concern yourself about me," said Laura Stanbridge, throwing herself into an arm-chair.

"I will see you later on," remarked Mr. Algernon Sutherland, as he glided out of the apartment.

In another moment the front door of the habitation was gently closed, and Peace was left alone with his lady companion.

"Who is that gentleman?" he inquired, after Sutherland had taken his departure.

"Why, don't you know?"

"How should I? Don't remember to have seen him before."

"Why, it's the boy, Alf Purvis, a heartless young scapegrace, an ungrateful hound!"

"Ungrateful, eh?"

"Ah, that's it. As base as he is ungrateful."

"The boy who used to be with farmer Jamblin?"

"Certainly—didn't you know him again?"

"Dear me, no. Why, he's quite a swell, gives himself all the airs and graces of the nobility. My word, but he's strangely altered."

"Ah, Charlie, you may well say that. He is altered. He owes everything to me, and a pretty return he makes for it."

"Would round upon you when he has the opportunity, I suppose—eh?"

"It doesn't answer his purpose to do so at present, but he has shown his teeth, and, doubtless, will bite in good time."

"Ah, Lorry," cried Peace, "what falsehood and dissimulation there is in this world! One does not know whom to trust. There's nothing open or candid about the lad; but make your mind easy and get rid of the fellow."

"I shall have to do so, I expect, but it cannot be done at present. But, I say, old man, how is it I've not seen anything of you for so long a time?"

"For a very excellent reason," returned Peace, with a smile. "Her Majesty required my services."

"Ah, I forgot you were landed at Sheffield for a little affair at Crooksemoor House."

"I left Dartmoor but a day or two since, and came up to London. A kind friend sent me a letter, in which was enclosed a twenty-pound note. I guessed where it came from, and so have called to thank you."

"I did not send it," exclaimed Laura Stanbridge suddenly. "If I had thought of it I certainly should have forwarded you something—but, to speak frankly, the idea never occurred to me."

"You did not send it? The handwriting looked like yours, and I made certain——"

"You are mistaken. I have not sent any letter to Dartmoor—indeed, I did not know you were there. I should have thought they would have sent you to Parkhurst."

"Not sent it?" muttered Peace, scratching his head in a puzzled and perplexed manner. "Who the devil did send it, then?"

"That's more than I can tell you. Still, if you are hard-up, and want a little coin, you can have something to be going on with."

"I don't want any money at present. Haven't I already told you that I had twenty quid when I left that cursed place? But about this young fellow," cried Peace, suddenly changing the subject. "You've been having a row with him, I suppose?"

The woman nodded.

"Is he a ruffian?"

"No, not that."

"What, then?"

"He was jeering, taunting, and aggravating, and I lost my temper."

"And fainted."

"Something very much like it. Come, let me help you to a glass of wine, or perhaps you would prefer a little brandy?"

"That would be better, certainly."

"Well, help yourself, old man, and make yourself at home."

Peace mixed himself some brandy and water, and also a glass of the same for his companion, who had by this time in a measure recovered from the effects of the scene which had taken place between herself and Mr. Algernon Sutherland.

"I suppose you have had a nice time of it since I saw you last?" observed Miss Stanbridge. "Dartmoor is not an inviting or cheerful place, they tell me."

"I should think not, but I got on and made a good many friends."

"Well, here's better luck in the future, and, as that gentleman with the gingham umbrella said, 'Always keep your weather eye open, my boy.' But you have not told me how the old lady is?"

"I haven't seen mother, or any of them as yet. Came straight to London, you know."

"Oh, yes, I forgot—so you told me. By the way, Emma was in the last swim, wasn't she?"

"Yes, she and my sister got six months each."

"Ah, Master Charlie, you were always sweet on that girl."

"Nonsense—no such thing," returned Peace indignantly.

"Ah! yes you were; you can't deceive me. I tell you you were sweet on her, and may be now for aught I know. Well, there's many a worse sort than Emma."

"A jolly sight worse," said Peace.

His companion laughed.

"There, didn't I tell you so? Ah! Charlie, you can't deceive me. Well, I should like to see Emma. Tell her to give me a call if she should come to London, which it's likely enough she may do."

"All right, I'll tell her—that is, if we meet again."

The two quondam companions continued their conversation about matters past and present for upwards of an hour, after which he bade Laura Stanbridge farewell, and "took his hook," as he termed it.

The grey mists of evening were descending over the mighty city as Charles Peace threaded his way through the streets in the direction of High Holborn. As he approached Middle Row he saw at a few yards' distance a face which had been familiar enough to him in his earlier days.

He came to a sudden halt, being in doubt as to his course of action.

"Charles Peace!" exclaimed a man, coming forward and offering his hand. "Speak, man. You do not fear or mistrust me—me, your old chum, Tom Gatliffe?"

"So it is you, then?" ejaculated Peace.

"Why, of course it is. Didn't you know me?"

"Yes, oh, dear, yes, of course I did, but we have not met for so long a time, and—well, to say the truth, you are greatly altered. You've grown a beard or something, which has quite changed your appearance, but—but—Tom, I'm jolly glad to meet you."

"Ah!" murmured the young engineer, "I am indeed altered—not the same Tom Gatliffe you knew years ago; but I have been wanting to see you for a long time, and this meeting is very opportune. Still following your old business?"

"Yes. I am not doing much just now, so thought I would run up to London for a day or two."

"Ah, I have got a lot to tell you, but we can't talk in the street upon private matters. Where can we have a glass together?"

"Here's a quiet little crib just hard by—my time's my own, and I am quite at your service. Come this way, and I'll show you where it is."

"The Blue Posts will do well enough," returned Gatliffe.

"Too noisy and crowded. I'll show you a better place. Come along."

The two companions walked on until they came to a quiet, unostentatious-looking public-house.

They entered, and Peace led the way to a small dingy parlour, which was tenantless. Gatliffe rang the bell and ordered some wine.

Glasses were filled, and they drank each other's health.

Tom Gatliffe was still handsome, but lines of care were distinctly visible on his well-formed features. The eyes had sunk deeper in their sockets, and there was a dark hue around them which Peace had never observed before.

He was not a very impressionable man, but he was much concerned at the evident change for the worse in the manner and appearance of the young engineer.

"You seem to be taken aback," cried the latter. "You didn't expect to meet me, and are surprised, I suppose."

"I didn't expect to meet you, I admit, but for all that I'm jolly glad to see you, for, barring one thing, we have been the best of friends, and I owe you much."

"Ah, the one thing you refer to," remarked his companion, in a slow and melancholy tone, "is what I more than anything else have been wishing to see you about. You know, I suppose, that Aveline and myself are separate and apart. We are strangers. It is no fault of mine that we are so—it is her wish that we should be so. She has left me, Charlie, left me for wealth, position, and rank. I am not good enough for her now—now that she is a lineal descendant of an earl."

"Are you separated, then? Are you divorced?" cried Peace.

"We are separated, but not actually divorced; but I offer no obstacle, and I believe that the earl, her grandfather, is about to obtain a divorce. Well, after all, it is perhaps but a natural consequence. I am not fit to mix in the society in which they move."

"My word, but you take the matter in a most self-sacrificing way. She's your lawful wife. Why don't you exercise a husband's authority, and insist upon her returning to her home?"

"I don't care to do that. If she won't come of her own free will, let her go her ways. I have done with her for good and for all. She was always vain, Charlie—always yearned for wealth and grandeur. Now she has both, and I hope she's satisfied. That question has been settled long ago. What I have been anxious to see you for is to learn from your own lips how it first came about that she was traced and proved to be what she most unquestionably is, the granddaughter of that high and mighty nobleman. You brought it about, or were the main instrument in doing so. Don't imagine for a moment that I am about to upbraid you."

"Well, you see, it was just like this. When I was staying at Broxbridge, a detective—a Mr. Wrench—came and made some inquiries about some blooming Italian professor and his wife. I told him all I knew, never thinking for a moment that they had anything to do with your wife. I told him all I knew, and he was a 'cute chap, and a decent sort of fellow enough for a detective—mind I put that in—for a detective—and the earl, too, was a good sort in his way."

"Ah, you know him, do you?"

"Certainly. I did some work for him—restored a picture, and made him some frames. Well, as I was saying, I gave Wrench all the information I could; he followed up the clue, and you know the rest. But, lord bless me, Tom, I don't know as you've lost much. As you were saying, she was always vain, and when I saw her in the carriage, being driven to the front entrance of Broxbridge Hall, she never so much as condescended to give me a passing nod—there's for you!"

"Yes, yes," cried Gatliffe testily; "but she's not so very much to blame—she has been wrought upon and over-persuaded by those about her."

"Rubbish, gammon!" cried Peace. "It's not much persuading she wanted—not a bit of it; it's her own free will. But, there, I don't want to pain you by these remarks; but it's what everybody says—everybody but you."

"I am satisfied, and am exceedingly glad I've seen you."

"I tell you what I'd do; but, of course, you have done so."

"Done what?"

"Insisted upon the earl allowing you a handsome income for the remainder of your life."

"I will not touch a penny of his money. Would starve first. Do you think I would consent to sell my wife?"

"Ah, well, that's a matter of taste," returned Peace. "I know which way the cat would jump if I were in your place; but, of course, all that is, as I before observed, a matter of taste."

"Ah!" murmured the young engineer, with a deep-drawn sigh, "it is astonishing what different views men take in matters of this sort."

"You take it too much to heart, I'm thinking," cried Peace.

"What makes you think so?"

"From your appearance, as well as from your manner."

"I am not like the same man, I admit, and yet I have no reason to complain. When Aveline was with me I had a struggle to get on to support her in a manner that she had a right to expect and desired. Since she has left me I have prospered beyond my most sanguine expectations. Two of my inventions have turned out much more perfect appliances than anyone ever supposed, and they bring me in a handsome yearly income in addition to the one I receive at the works; so that I am as you may imagine a prosperous man."

"But still you are not happy," suggested Peace.

"Not altogether, I admit."

"Hark ye, Tom. Don't let your happiness be disturbed by a woman. A man's a fool to do that"

"There's a good many fools in the world, then," returned Gatliffe.

"Admitted, but that's no reason that you or I should add to their number."

Gatliffe made no reply. He was silent and thoughtful for some little time, after which he said, in an altered tone:

"And now, with regard to yourself. You have not told me how you are getting on. Don't be offended, but if you are in need of cash—ready money, you know."

"I am not in need of any," cried Peace. "Not at present, at any rate."

"Should you be?"

"Well, what then?"

"You know where to apply—to me."

"A letter addressed to Mr. Gatliffe, London, will reach you, I suppose?" returned Peace, with a laugh.

"I will give you my address. I am still at the same place—Wood Green. Come and dine with me some Sunday."

"I can't. I return to Sheffield to-morrow, but when next in London will do so. Rest assured I shall keep the address."

And with this promise the two friends parted.

CHAPTER LXII.

On the day after his interview with Tom Gatliffe, Peace returned to Sheffield.

The first visit he paid was to his mother, who was overjoyed to see him.

The matrimonial alliance which Peace had contemplated forming with the discreet and virtuous Miss James was rudely interrupted by the sentence passed by the judge upon Charles Peace for the Crooksemoor House burglary. Miss James and his sister had to do their six months as accomplices of the greater villain.

When Peace returned after the expiration of the time he had passed in "durance vile," he found that Emma James had not been so constant as he had fondly hoped.

The fact is she was thoroughly disgusted with the course he had taken at the time of the trial. He had vainly striven to throw the onus upon the two women. Miss James therefore allied herself with a young man more congenial to her own disposition, and Peace was fairly jilted.

This did not trouble him much. He was vexed at the time, but that was all. He consoled himself by flirting with several of the opposite sex.

Upon his return to Sheffield he resumed his old practice of playing the violin at public-houses. Although this was not particularly remunerative, it brought him in some little ready cash, and in the daytime he hawked spectacles and other articles.

It was during his peregrinations that he first met Hannah Ward, whom he is said to have married in July, 1858. This, however, is a little doubtful, for according to the prison statistics he was not discharged from gaol till the October of that year.

This is a matter which we shall find it difficult to determine, and we therefore give Mrs. Thompson's version:

He went long distances sometimes (observes that charming lady). It was on one of these excursions that he first met Hannah Peace—not Hannah Peace, if you please, but Mrs. William Ward.

I will tell you what he told me about their first meeting. It was at the side of a canal on the road to Hanley, in Staffordshire, he met Hannah, who had a baby in her arms, then six months old.

She stated, after they had got into conversation, that she was going along that way to find out her brother-in-law, who was the only friend she had in the world.

She was then a widow of William Ward, a pensioner, and she told Peace so. He asked her what she was going to do if she did not find her brother-in-law, and she answered, "I think of committing suicide."

Peace said, "You are surely not going to do that—a nice-looking woman like you." She was much older than he was, and I have no doubt was a good-looking woman.

Peace said that they stayed all night at an inn. He promised her that if she would live with him he would prove a good father to Willie.

They went to Worksop for awhile, and when there he perpetrated several burglaries in the neighbourhood. I can't tell you how many. But there, if I had taken his advice, I would have put down everything and written his life.

That child is now Willie Ward, who is twenty-one years of age, and Peace is not his father.

He (Willie) never showed strong affection for Peace, but when he came to live at our house in London he would do anything for me.

I think Peace took Mrs. Ward and her child to Sheffield and introduced her to his mother as his wife there.

The testimony of Mrs. Thompson, however, it must be admitted, must be looked upon with distrust, if not with suspicion—and whether this is the true story of the meeting is not so easy to determine. It is, however, quite certain that after his marriage or connection with the woman whom he always acknowledged as his wife, he resumed his old courses.

It was not many weeks after her marriage that Mrs. Peace's eyes were enlightened as to the extra professional avocation of her husband, by a visit of the police to her house.

Peace, as we have already demonstrated during the progress of this work, was a very fair musician, a clever carver and gilder, and a man of good natural ability in many ways.

He was ingenious, too, as well as artistic. He was a mechanician of some skill, having invented and made the false arm on which he greatly relied to conceal his crimes, as no one would suspect a one-armed burglar, and if advertised, he would be described as a one-armd man.

When father told us (Willie used to say) where he was stopping, we asked him if he was not afraid of the sergeant's seeing his hand. He said he could not see it, as he covered it up. We asked him how he did it, and he took from his pocket the guttapercha arm you have heard about.

He told us he made it himself, and he certainly is very clever at making things.

He had got a piece of fine guttapercha, and he made it into a tube large enough to allow his arm to pass down it. Secured to the bottom of the guttapercha was a thin steel plate, in the middle of which was a hole with screw thread.

Into this hole he screwed a small hook, and at meal times he said that he took out the hook and screwed into the hole a fork which he had made for the purpose, and with it he used to eat his meals.

At the top of the guttapercha was a strap, which he used to fasten over his shoulder, and in that way keep the thing in its place.

No one who saw it could have told that it was not a false arm. He made his own tools, which were at once exceedingly simple and effective, and once made a saw out of a piece of tin-plate.

He had, moreover, very considerable histrionic faculty, acting all sorts of characters to the police, whom he specially liked to deceive, and "changing his face" in a way that astonished the who knew him best, and made them declare that even th could not recognise him as he passed in the street.

He certainly could effect remarkable change in a moment, and the one which most disguises dark faces, by bringing the blood into his face till he looked bloated, instead of thin, and this without holding his breath, or any preparation.

After his marriage he installed his unhappy partner in a house at Sheffield, and professed to be earning a living as a hawker.

It is quite certain that at this period of his career he was looked upon with suspicion by the police, who watched him most zealously; but he was so specious a rascal that he half persuaded them he was pursuing an honest course of life.

Returning one day from one of his depredatory excursions, he met Sergeant Marsland, one of the officers who gave evidence against him in the inquiry respecting the Crookam House robbery.

The sergeant regarded him with a look of suspicion.

"Well!" cried Peace, with the utmost effrontery, "what are you stagging me for? Suppose I'm doing something on the cross, eh?"

"Don't you be so cheeky, my friend," observed the sergeant. "I haven't accused you of doing anything wrong, neither shall I, unless there is strong reason for my doing so."

"Well, then, you just leave me alone, and don't be watching me about in the way you and others of your calling have been doing. I'm right enough. Have got a wife to look after, and don't mean to get into trouble again, if I can help it."

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned the police officer. "And understand, Peace, that I shan't interfere with you as long as you keep clear of the law."

"I only ask you to leave me alone. I am all right enough now, but it isn't any reason because I have been once in trouble that I should be for ever suspected, and watched or followed about."

"I will take no notice of you provided you keep clear."

"All right—that's understood, then," cried Peace, in a cheery tone.

The police-sergeant made no further reply, but walked on at a steady, measured pace.

"The stealthy beggars have got their eyes upon me," murmured Peace, "and I must act with caution, or I shall be 'copped' as safe as houses."

To "work" at Sheffield, as he termed it, or, in other words, to commit robberies in that town, was not to be thought of; he therefore paid occasional visits to other towns, and on many occasions he went about disguised as a navvy, pretending to be looking for work, but he was really "spotting" the houses he meant to attack.

He broke into a clothes warehouse at Bradford, and was detected in the act, and, to cover his escape, he fired "wide" at a policeman and the watchman.

This adventure put an end to his depredations in that town for some considerable period, for he was, naturally enough, afraid to pursue his favourite calling after the narrow escape he had had.

He therefore changed the scene of action, and betook himself to Leeds, where he remained for three weeks, during which period he forwarded remittances to his wife at Sheffield.

While at Leeds, he met with an adventure which caused him some anxiety, for it was only by a miracle that he escaped discovery.

He entered a house on the outskirts of the town just as it was getting dusk.

He proceeded at once to the first floor of the establishment, and possessed himself of several articles of value.

As he was engaged in transferring them to his bag, he heard footsteps on the stairs. Quick as lightning he flew out of the room, and managed to reach the next storey without attracting the notice of any of the occupants.

The room in which he now found himself was an elegantly furnished sleeping apartment. He stood breathless, listening to the movements of those below.

He heard the sound of a female voice addressing a companion, who was evidently another female, to judge from the tones of the voice.

To his horror, he heard the footsteps of two persons who were evidently making for either the room in which he was ensconced or else one on the same floor.

He was seriously alarmed, but did not lose his presence of mind.

He looked out of the window of the bedchamber, and saw several persons on the lawn in front of the house. They were playing at croquet.

Escape by means of the window was, therefore, impossible, his movements would be sure to attract the attention of the croquet players, and if he passed out of the room through the door, he would, in all probability, be confronted by the two females.

At such a crisis as this every moment was precious.

"What could he do?"

A sudden thought struck him. In the bedroom was a large press or wardrobe. A key was in the door of this. Peace withdrew it as noiselessly as possible, crept into the press, and then locked himself in.

Any way it would give him time to determine upon his course of action. Possibly the ladies were about to enter some other apartment.

He listened till his ears tingled again. He was not kept long in suspense.

The footsteps on the floor told him that other inmates were there besides himself. He knew also that they were of the softer sex.

The words which fell from the lips of the newcomers he heard most distinctly.

A horrible thought crossed his mind. It was this:

Suppose the articles he had purloined were missed, a search would be made, and the doors of the press would be broken open without ceremony.

He felt half inclined to unlock the door and make a rush for it, but then the fact that there were some dozen persons or more on the grass plot warned him of the danger attendant upon such a course.

No, he would patiently await the issue.

THE MAID BEGAN TO DRESS HER HAIR.

The two personages who had entered the bedroom were the mistress of the house and her maid. He very soon became aware of this from the conversation which was being carried on.

The lady sat herself down before the looking-glass, and the maid began to dress her hair.

She was about to make an elaborate toilette before sitting down to dinner. Through the keyhole of the door of his prison-house Peace commanded a view of both females, and was, therefore, able to appreciate to its full extent the elaborate performance that was going on. He inwardly cursed the absurd customs of ladies adorning themselves before presenting themselves in the banqueting room.

He watched the long tresses of the beautiful woman as they fell over her shoulders, and were gathered up by the taper fingers of her handmaiden. The time occupied in dressing and decorating the head seemed to be an age to the imprisoned burglar—who was half stifled in his hiding-place.

"I don't like the way you've arranged my hair," said the lady, viewing herself in the glass. "It appears to be drawn too much back, Kate."

"Well, marm," said the girl, "it's as you wished; but if I might be allowed to have my own way I should dress it as I did on Tuesday last. I am sure you looked lovely then."

"Well, do it as you did it the other night. You shall have your way."

The hair had to be undone, and further manipulations had to be gone through, much to Peace's disgust.

The sound of merry voices, which proceeded from the party on the lawn, reached the apartment, and occasional bursts of laughter were also audible.

"Oh!" murmured Peace, "I'm in a pretty pickle, and it will be a wonderful thing to me if I succeed in getting clean off. Hang the woman! how long does she intend to sit before that blooming glass?"

Peace soon discovered that only part of the toilette had been performed. The lady had to change her dress, but luckily for him the garment in question was not in the wardrobe. Had this been the case he would have been lost.

It took some time to arrange this in a satisfactory manner. Jewels, cuffs, and collar had to be added, and after some further time had been expended in adornment, the lady and the maid crept noiselessly out of the room.

Peace felt greatly relieved.

The question was, how could he manage to get clear off. He unlocked the door of the wardrobe and peered out.

No other person was in the bedchamber besides himself. He looked out of the window, the croquet players were no longer visible.

They had in all probability betaken themselves to the dining-room. He felt assured of this as he heard the confused number of voices proceeding from the lower portion of the house.

He waited till he thought they had taken their seats at the dinner-table, then he went to the landing and listened.

A savoury odour found its way up the staircase, and the clatter of dishes was distinctly audible.

"Now is my time," murmured the burglar.

He passed down the first flight of stairs and beheld servants passing to and fro in the hall.

What was to be done? His retreat was cut off. If he attempted to descend into the hall detection was certain, and to remain where he was would be almost as bad.

By this time it was nearly dark on the outside of the house, but the blaze of light came from the rooms below and the gas-lamp in the hall. Peace was sadly perplexed. Every moment he expected the articles he had purloined would be missed.

He went once more to the window. In the front of the house was an old vine, one stem of which was near to the side of the window.

When he made this discovery he at once determined upon his mode of escape. Hanging the bag containing the stolen property round his neck, he crept out of the window, and supporting himself by the stem of the vine, by means of it he managed to reach the grass-plot in front of the house.

He had hardly succeeded in doing this when he heard shouts and cries of alarm proceeding from some persons in one of the rooms at the basement of the habitation. He did not wait to ascertain the reason for the cries, but fled as fast as his legs could carry him, and vaulting over the railings which encircled the garden, he reached a narrow by-lane.

He still heard cries in the distance, and saw several persons emerge from the side gate of the garden.

Two or three shouted to him, and ordered him to stop, but Peace knew a trick worth two of that. He fled, but found, to his dismay, that a party of gentlemen had rushed off in pursuit of him.

He heard the clatter of their footsteps on the hard road.

Shouldering his bag, he rushed madly on until he reached a dense thicket of trees; into this he crept and passed on as quickly as the nature of the trees and underwood would admit.

He now arrived at the open country again; running across two meadows he came to a narrow pathway skirted by two hedges.

At the end of this was an old dilapidated-looking mansion, on the front of which was a board with the words "To be Let or Sold" written on its face.

Peace passed through the hedge by the side of the mansion, and made for the back door. He succeeded in turning the lock of this by means of one of his skeleton keys.

He opened the door, slid in, and closed it noiselessly after him. Then he bolted it from the inside.

He was now the solitary occupant of a large red brick building, which had the unenviable reputation of being haunted, and hence it was that it had been so long tenantless.

But, cheerless and dilapidated as the place was, it afforded him a temporary shelter, and as no one suspected that he had effected an entrance, he was safe for the present.

The house was miserably dark and dismal, and he would have been greatly relieved if he had a light.

But this was not to be thought of; if he ignited his wax taper it would most likely betray him, for anybody passing the house would be apprised of his presence by the gleam of light from one of the windows. He had, therefore, no alternative than to endure the gloom of the place as he best could.

An hour passed away—an hour of misery and suspense—an hour of bitterness and depression.

Still Peace did not deem it safe as yet to sally forth.

The party of gentlemen who had started in pursuit of him might be looking about, and Peace deemed it advisable not to give them a chance of effecting a capture.

He therefore waited for nearly another hour, at the expiration of which time he sallied forth, bag in hand.

No one was visible; he argued that the party must have returned to the house, so shouldering his bag he walked boldly on, taking care to keep on the dark side of the road as he watched for the appearance of any chance wayfarer.

In a short time he reached the high road, when, at some distance ahead of him, he beheld a night patrol. He took good care to conceal himself in a by-lane till the officer of the law had passed; then he emerged from his place of concealment, and proceeded along with greater confidence.

CHAPTER LXIII.

Peace had not gone very far before he came up with a travelling caravan.

Peace could not at first quite make out what it was, but upon closer inspection he came to the conclusion that it was a show, such as one sees at fairs. The driver was seated in front of the vehicle trolling a merry ditty.

"Good night, my friend," said Peace.

"An' good night to you," returned the driver. "Bedad, but this is not the most lively road for a man to thravel."

"No," said Peace, "it is not; but you have the advantage of me. I have many miles to travel on foot, and I am as tired as a dog. You couldn't give a chap a lift, I suppose? I'll pay for the accommodation."

"Faith, and maybe I could; but who and what are you?"

"A traveller—a poor hawker."

"Och! Sure, now, I ain't the man to refuse a favour o' that sort. Which way are you going?"

"Any way, as long as I can get a lodging for the night."

"You seem a quiet, dacent sort of man, and, as the saying is, any company is better than none, so jump up—you can ride by the side of me."

"I am sure you are very kind," cried Peace.

The caravan driver brought his vehicle to a halt, and Peace was but too thankful to avail himself of the offer.

When he had taken his seat, the lumbering wooden house was again set in motion.

"An' sure it's not much room there is for the dhriver and his frinds on this mighty big machine. But there's good reason for that—the room is wanted for the inside passengers."

"Inside passengers!"

"By the powers of St. Patrick, yes! and not much to spare, either."

"What have you got inside, then?"

"What! why, great natheral coorosities—sarpints, kangaroos, a baboon, and a few monkeys. Oh, they are amoosing crathurs, an' as sinsible as Christians."

"Oh, I dare say."

"The guv' has gone on in the other caravans to the fair, which is to take place—bedad, I don't know rightly where it's to take place, but I'm to be there sometime to-morrow."

"Oh, you're in the travelling show line, are you?"

"The guv'nor is—I'm only an ondherstrapper, as you may call it—a sort of handy man. But there's a power of work to get through in one way and another."

"Then where are you now bound for?"

"Is it where am I goin' you mane?"

"Yes."

"Och, sure, but it's at a bit of a roadside house I'm afther making for—The Blue Dolphin."

"And where is that situated?"

"Where? Sure, now, an' it'll be about a mile or so this side of Pocklington."

"Ah," said Peace, remembering the name of Pocklington but too well.

It was a Mrs. Pocklington who prosecuted him for attempted burglary, and who had committed such a ferocious assault on him with a house broom.

"But maybe you don't know the place. The name is not familiar to you."

"Ah! but it is most familiar," returned Peace; "and, if they can accommodate me, I think I will put up at the Blue Dolphin."

"Ah! bedad, but they must accommodate you. They're dacent people enough, and ain't particular at all, at all."

The two chatted familiarly during the whole of the journey, and the conversation did not flag or come to a conclusion till the house in question was reached.

Mr. Dennis Macarty—that was the name of its driver—took good care to see his animal safely housed for the night, and after this had been done he joined Peace in the snug little parlour of the establishment.

Mr. Macarty seemed to be well known to the landlord and landlady, as well as the frequenters of the house, all of whom addressed him in a familiar and friendly manner.

Peace, upon first entering the house, requested to be shown into the bedroom he was to occupy, saying that he wished to have a wash; his real object, however, was to secrete the bag containing the valuables he had purloined in some quiet corner.

He found in the room a chest of drawers, most of which were empty; into one of these he placed his bag, then he closed the drawer, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

When this had been done, he felt tolerably secure. It was not likely that any person would break open the drawer for the purpose of inspecting the contents of his bag.

He therefore returned to the public room, where he passed the evening in a convivial manner.

Upon retiring for the night, he opened the drawer, and found his bag in precisely the same position as he had left it.

He therefore tumbled into bed and slept soundly till the morning.

Upon proceeding downstairs he found, upon inquiry, that his picked-up friend Macarty had risen some hour or so before.

He was at this time in the stable, attending to the inmates of his wooden house.

Macarty greeted him in a most cordial manner, and after his animals and reptiles had been fed, returned to the breakfast-room of the establishment with Peace.

(To be continued.)

He denied that the lock of hair which had been sent from Melipilla was his, and declared that a letter which he wrote to the lady who had sent it to him, thanking her for the great service she had rendered to his cause, was really written at Mr. Holmes's dictation with a view to finding out if any more information was to be obtained from that quarter. He admitted that he had given a photo of his wife and child to Mrs. Tredgett for the photos of Arthur Orton's family, but said that she had been bothering him for a photograph, and he gave it to her to keep her quiet. The whole of his relations with the Orton family also came out, together with statements of the various sums of money which he had given to them.

All his affidavits were next handled by the counsel, and he was forced to admit that his statements that his witnesses recognised him at once were false, and that of the whole lot Mr. Biddulph was the only relative who consented to regard him as a cousin. When taxed with lying in his affidavits, and stating that his relatives fully identified him, he lost his temper and exclaimed, "After knowing me in my young days, and me not being so much altered, and after other people had recognised me, why couldn't they?"

The Solicitor-General finally produced some letters written to a clerk in the office of his opponents' lawyers offering him £200 for "Orton information," but both of the really important ones The Claimant denied with much wrath, and it was subsequently found that handwriting experts were doubtful as to whether these letters were genuine.

That closed the cross-examination, and Serjeant Ballantyne re-examined for a day, eliciting the statement that The Claimant had never sought to refresh his memory by conversations with his mother and Bogle. He also again swore that he had never been tattooed in his life, and that he had not seen any of the women who were said to be his sisters until he was confronted with them in Holmes's office. Having been in the witness-box from May 30 till July 7, he was allowed to stand down, and then the court was adjourned until November 7.

When the court reassembled it was found that both sides had been strengthening their positions, and Serjeant Ballantyne produced a little list of ninety fresh witnesses. With the exception of one or two whose evidence we shall give, and of the experts—medical, surgical, photographic, and caligraphic—they were persons of no weight at all, merely the result of assiduously following up the clues provided by Carter, now reinstated.

The second stage was opened with the evidence of Bogle, the negro servant, who had undoubtedly been the source from which a great deal of The Claimant's information had been obtained. Bogle briefly related his meeting with The Claimant in the courtyard of the hotel in Sydney, and said that he recognised him at once. He vigorously denied having coached the plaintiff at all, and said that he knew so much about the Tichborne family that there was no need to do so. He would have told him anything he wanted if he had been asked, but he had never been approached on the subject.

In cross-examination Sir John Coleridge, who had become Attorney-General during the adjournment, was very light on the old negro, and obtained little information from him. Then Colonel Lushington was called. He had never seen the original Roger, and was led to accept the substitute merely on the word of Mr. Hopkins. He was followed by Mr. Bulpett, the banker, whose evidence was sharply handled. He gave an account of the interview with Gosford in the London Hotel, when the latter put the contents of the sealed packet to The Claimant as a test case, which absolutely differed from the sworn testimony of Gosford. He declared that at the very first The Claimant had given an accurate account of the contents of the packet, whereas it was not till the examination before the Master in Chancery that the plaintiff had acknowledged the existence of the document.

Then came the testimony of Mr. Locock Webb, the attorney who had prepared the affidavits and dealt with the case when in the Chancery stage. He was compelled to produce not only copies of the affidavits themselves, but also the notes from which they had been prepared, and it was then found that there had been a considerable amount of touching up done. He was not exonerated from the blame of this, because there can be little doubt that he knew how the statements of some of the witnesses had been doctored, but it was also proved that he had been kept in ignorance of a good deal of what was passing, and that his view of the matter was therefore not a fair one. For years the process of retouching affidavits to give them a really artistic and credible form was known to Chancery barristers as "Locock-Webbing."

The public were treated to a fiery display when the next witness, Mr. Baigent, was put into the box. He was handed over to Mr. Hawkins for flaying, and the continual fights between the poor drawing-master and the sharp counsel were very entertaining. He had accepted the plaintiff's statement that he was Roger Tichborne partly on his own word and partly because his voice resembled the baronet's. When this impression had been strengthened by the relation of several family stories, Baigent felt certain that he had got hold of the right person, and stuck to him through thick and thin. He was so absolutely certain that the real Roger had been found that whenever anything was said in court which appeared to cast a doubt upon The Claimant's identity, he flared up at once.

"It's perfectly disgraceful to hear such imputations cast upon a man's character," he would shout out.

"Mr. Baigent," Mr. Hawkins would retort, "will you be kind enough to hold your tongue till you are spoken to."

"That's very rude of you, Mr. Hawkins."

"Don't get out of temper yet, Mr. Baigent. It's too early in the day for that." Then the little drawing-master would appeal to the Bench for protection.

"I get so excited, my lord, I really do not know what I am doing."

"But, Mr. Baigent," the judge would say, "this is a very simple question."

"It is a very ridiculous question!"

So the battle went on, the drawing-master appealing "Not to be bullied by a man with those robes on," and reminding the opposing counsel that he was not in his pet Old Bailey.

But the most important part of Baigent's evidence was the correspondence which passed between him and Holmes and Rous. It told of the daily barometer of hope and fear, of the petty jealousy which all the supporters felt, of the consternation when news of Orton arrived from Melipilla, and of the dismay when they heard of the close connection between Castro and Orton. As Baigent wrote: "Castro and Orton run together throughout Australia rather too close to be comfortable." He added, however: "If all Australians are like the baronet, I would not give much for anything that they swear to."

That he must have had very grave suspicions was shown in a letter to Rous at the time when Holmes had retired from the case and The Claimant was threatening to become bankrupt, so that Holmes's bill might be taxed.

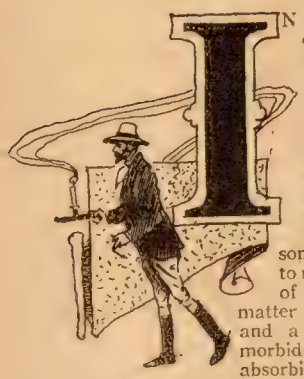
"In becoming a bankrupt," he wrote, "Holmes's bill would have to be filed, and the opposition would be able to get a copy of it and from it learn all that Holmes has done for him since his arrival in England. And would not the Solicitor-General cross-examine Sir Roger on it and the items? It would cost him his estates almost, if not quite."

On December 19, after the medical men had given their evidence, the judge, jury, counsel, and doctors took the plaintiff into a private room and stripped him to look for certain marks which were supposed to be on the body of the real Roger. They found the marks in the places indicated, but they did not agree with the causes which were said to have produced them. Following this, the Australian evidence was put in, and on December 20, Serjeant Ballantyne announced that he had closed the case for The Claimant, and the court adjourned for the Christmas recess.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

The Murder at Middelburg

"It was the trait'rous hand,
But lately raised to fondle and caress,
That sped upon its way the fatal shaft."
—LISTON HAYES, "The Vengeance of Vitellia."



IN the teeming capitals and densely populated manufacturing centres of the Old World, the crime of murder is one of such everyday occurrence that it really attracts very little attention outside its immediate vicinity, unless there be about the motive that prompted it, or the manner in which it was committed, something so extraordinary as to raise it above the sordid level of such things, and make it a matter of general human interest and a savoury morçeau for the morbid mind. Were it not for the absorbing hold that the mysteries of crime in general, and the capital crime in particular, have always had upon the interest of the public, our national gallery of works of fiction and the drama would present a very attenuated appearance, and the occupations of the heroes of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Emile Gaboriau would be gone indeed.

Strong as the crime of murder is in its appeal to the human mind in the seething, busy hives of Europe, it is difficult for the dweller in great cities to realise the intense thrill and sensation the taking of human life arouses in the budding townships and little hamlets of the newer countries over-sea. We are not alluding to the "wild and woolly West." Of course there is no doubt that at one time, when mining booms were thick as leaves in Vallombrosa, and the lust of gold ran riot in the brains of men and swallowed up their finer feelings, when the bowie-knife and the six-shooter were freely used to clinch an argument or drive home an assertion, human life was cheap, and a moment's delay in pulling the trigger would often have transformed the slayer into the slain, but the march of progress has changed all that, and to-day the West may be woolly, but it is not so wild but that the crime of murder is appraised at its proper value, and requited accordingly.

In one respect our Colonial towns and villages faithfully resemble their prototypes in the Old Country, and that is that every individual member of the community is more or less intimately acquainted with everyone else and his affairs, even unto his ox and his ass and the stranger within his gates, and, be it said in parentheses, should a stranger arrive in one of these Arcadian Sweet Auburns, they don't exactly "'eave 'alf a brick at 'im," but he is immediately made the sole topic of conversation until the inhabitants have satisfied themselves as to his pedigree, and past, present, and future business, to as exhaustive an extent as possible. The sensation caused by a murder in a hamlet of this description can be imagined.

The scene of the dastardly crime we are about to describe is laid in Middelburg, known since the war as "the Aldershot of Cape Colony," and brought recently into public notoriety owing to the dissatisfaction and incipient mutiny brewing among the troops stationed there. It is a place in which the dust-storm indigenous to South Africa loves to hold high revel, and it is no wonder Thomas Atkins "grouses," for, as the writer well knows from long experience, the red dust which delights in urging its wild career across the veldt, and penetrating to the innermost recesses of anything and everything, is a most undesirable adjunct to "bully beef."

In this typical South African town, then, and in a typical South African bungalow, close to the principal thoroughfare, dwelt with his wife and family a Mr. Charles Petrus du Plessis, an Africander, as his name implies, of Huguenot descent. He was a tradesman held in great local respect, the owner of the "general store" so common in the Colonies a replica on a small scale of our Wizard of Westbourne Grove. Up to the time of the great struggle between Briton and Boer for supremacy in the sub-continent, Mr. du Plessis marched hand in hand with prosperity. The business flourished, and, to all outward appearance, the members of the Du Plessis household were as happy and contented as the circumstances warranted. But once the war was over and the Briton had asserted his claim to be acknowledged master from Capetown to the Zambesi River, a great alteration was wrought in the affairs of Mr. du Plessis. Notwithstanding that they lived amongst and traded with numbers of Boers of rancorous anti-English tendencies, Mr. and Mrs. du Plessis espoused the cause of the British arms, and, as a not unnatural consequence, the declaration of peace brought in its train disaster in the shape of financial difficulties. Trade fell off, Du Plessis was looked upon askance by the more bigoted of his Dutch neighbours, and, with ruin staring him in the face, he was driven to the conclusion that the sale of his business was the one thing possible left to him.

At this point we will leave the commercial side of Mr. du Plessis's life, and pry for the nonce into its domestic aspect. He was a man barely in the prime of life—forty, to wit—and his wife was a buxom woman, his senior by eight years. They lived peaceably and happily, as far as was known to the outside world, surrounded by their children. A Miss Truby, an invalid sister of Mrs. du Plessis, lived with them, and a little Kaffir servant girl completed the household, and did the menial work of the establishment.

Now, many people (and pity 'tis there are not more of them) have a fad for doing everything by system, and a remarkably commonsense fad it is, too. Both Mr. and Mrs. du Plessis were method personified, and carried out the daily duties of life with clockwork precision. In one item of her daily routine Mrs. du Plessis varied not one iota, and this unfailing regularity of hers, it will be seen, constituted the keystone of the dreadful tragedy known as "the Middelburg murder."

At the close of the evening meal, the principal meal of the day in most South African households, when the clatter of knives and forks and tongues had dwindled down to vanishing point, and the calm of repletion had settled on the family circle, Mrs. du Plessis would rise from the table as a sign that the meal was at an end. She herself inaugurated the clearance of the crockery, etc., by taking the milk jugs into the pantry opening off the little kitchen, which was situated immediately to the rear of the dining-room. There she would, like a careful housewife, place them on the side of the window, in order to keep the milk fresh as long as might be. The window itself was small and square, and furnished with iron bars, besides which a wire netting was stretched outside the window-pane, as a protection against the incursions of the pertinacious South African fly.

Mr. du Plessis was no whit behind his better half in the unfailing regularity of his comings and goings and doings. His presence obviated the necessity of a prominent public clock in the main street of Middelburg. Was Mr. du Plessis coming down the street, key in hand, to open the store for the daily round of business? Ah, then it wanted perhaps two minutes to 8.30 a.m., and the worthy Middelburgians regulated their chronometers accordingly. Greenwich mean time was not more accurate than the precise Du Plessis.

However, when the great struggle was over, and peace had permeated the war-worn land, the hour of adversity for the house of Du Plessis arrived, and he found, as we have before indicated, that there was nothing for it, in the face of the Boer boycott of him and his store, but to dispose of his business. The negotiations were completed, and on the eve of the day on which they had to relinquish the store and see that which had been theirs so long pass into the hands of the stranger, the Du Plessis family sat at tea a sad and downcast group. The morrow, they knew, was big with fate for them; how little did they—all but one of them—dream of the fearful tragedy that was to darken their homestead that very night! The brief sub-tropical twilight had no sooner fallen than it was merged into the darker shades of night, and, all unseen, the Angel of Death poised himself on noiseless wing preparatory to the fatal swoop.

Mr. and Mrs. du Plessis were going out that night to pay a farewell visit. The evening meal was just concluded, when Mrs. du Plessis remarked:

"Oh, by the way, Charles, I've broken my hair comb, and I can't go out without one. I wish I had thought of it before you closed the store."

"Never mind, my dear," said Mr. du Plessis, "I'll run down to the shop and get one for you. I know where they are kept, and if you give me a box of matches I'll be back with one in no time."

"Very well, then," rejoined his wife; "here are the matches, and I'll clear the things away and get myself ready."

Mr. du Plessis took the matches and went out, while his wife possessed herself of the milk-jugs, as usual.

Get herself ready! Ah, the irony of it! Little did poor Mrs. du Plessis know the length of the journey she was about to undertake, and little did she dream that those commonplace words were to be her last! Clouds there were, certainly, hanging over their financial horizon, but there was no scent of personal danger in the air, and, all unsuspecting, poor Mrs. du Plessis gathered up her milk-jugs, according to her wont, and went trippingly through the little kitchen, only to meet her doom in the tiny pantry.

A fellow-townsman, passing by the Du Plessis's residence a few minutes later, was astonished by a little girl rushing out to the gate, uttering piercing shrieks and imploring him in heartrending accents to "Come in and see mother! Come in and see mother!"

Taking the little girl by the hand, he entered the house, encountering on the threshold the Kaffir servant-girl, livid and quaking with terror. The dining-room and kitchen were empty, but in the little cupboard-like pantry he found Miss Truby, the invalid sister of Mrs. du Plessis, who had dragged herself from her bed of sickness, and was now kneeling over the body of her sister, who was lying across the threshold of the pantry in pools of blood, apparently proceeding, at first sight, from her mouth.

By her side was a small fox terrier, which kept wagging his tail incessantly and barking up at the little pantry window.

The man who had been called in thought at first that the unfortunate lady had ruptured a blood vessel, but as he struck a match and bent down to make a closer examination, Mrs. du Plessis gave a final gasp and expired, and as she made a feeble movement he was horrified to realise that a ghastly crime had been committed. In the poor woman's neck was a frightful wound, in which there still stuck a fearful double-edged blade, like that of a savage's thrusting-spear.

Sickened by the awful sight, the man dashed out of the house of death, and flew down the street with all speed to make the unfortunate husband aware of what had happened, and to give information to the police. Arriving at the store of Du Plessis, he observed a light flash through the glass panels of the door. It was caused by Mr. du Plessis lighting a lamp to look for the hair-comb for his wife.

When the dread tidings had been broken to the bereaved husband, he ran distractedly up the street in the direction of his house, which he reached in time to assist in raising the inanimate form of his dead wife from the pantry floor. Investigations were then made as to how the tragedy had occurred. It was clear that she had met her death just as she was placing the milk-jugs, according to her daily custom, on the narrow window ledge, for the receptacles themselves lay upon the pantry floor shattered to atoms.

The removal of the bloodstained corpse from the scene of the tragedy was taking place as the police arrived, and at the same moment a medical man made his appearance, but poor Mrs. du Plessis was long past earthly aid. The keen eyes of the representatives of the law were not long in detecting upon the floor the murderous weapon with which the victim had been despatched to her long account, and besides the knife they also discovered a long shaft of white-painted bamboo.

The blade and the haft fixed together constituted a weapon strongly resembling a Zulu thrusting-spear, an instrument for use at close quarters, and distinct from the longer assegai, or throwing-spear. It was evident that the blade had fallen from the haft, to the end of which it had been fitted, after the fatal stab had been administered. The hastily-constructed weapon had, nevertheless, hung together long enough to do its fatal work all too effectually, for the body of Mrs. du Plessis lay upon the bed, cold now and stiff.

The victim being past all surgical help, the doctor lent his assistance to the police in furthering the work of theory and deduction, in order to discover a possible clue to the dastardly assassin. Mrs. du Plessis had been speared in the neck, that was very evident, and the hand that had wielded the weapon was strong and relentless. Fell purpose was indicated by the manner in which the blade of the assegai had been twisted in order to cut the arteries through and through. The main blood-vessels were completely severed.

Who was the author of this revolting crime? Why had he committed it? And, above all, how had the deed been done? Here was a mystery worthy of a Sherlock Holmes or a Lecocq. That it was perpetrated by a male hand there was not the shadow of a doubt; that terrible thrust and powerful twist were not the work of any woman. A careful examination of the back entrances to the house proved that they were securely closed. Neither had the noise of any struggle been heard, only a choking gasp and a heavy thud as the victim's body fell to the pantry floor, and the barking of the little fox terrier, which had been following close to the hem of his mistress's skirts.

Furthermore, the pantry itself was of such tiny dimensions that it was manifestly impossible that anyone could in any way use a long-handled weapon in it like the fatal bamboo spear. Even supposing that the murderer had pounced upon his victim and slain her in the pantry, it is not within the bounds of possibility that he could flee from the scene of his crime without being at once seen from the living-room.

The more the pros and cons of the case were considered, the more mysterious did its aspect become. Both motive and method were shrouded in the gloom of impenetrable obscurity.

Mrs. du Plessis was a peaceable, law-abiding woman, and no man or woman in Middelburg fostered in his or her breast any spirit of enmity towards her. Was it the act of some ultra-virulent Boer as the result of the pro-British leanings on the part of the Du Plessis family? Scarcely credible. Had that been the case, the husband himself would have paid

He proposed marriage to Miss Robinson.

the price of his loyalty. There was absolutely nothing tangible to be gained by the murder, so the theory that it might have been the work of some native marauder was dismissed as untenable.

The extraordinary part of it was that, no matter however good a motive there had been for the crime, or whether no motive at all had existed, the actual commission of the deed seemed altogether impossible in itself. The theory of suicide was, of course, propounded, but that was thoroughly gone into, and likewise found to be impracticable.

It appeared to be a mystery impossible of solution, and the detectives found themselves in a veritable cul de sac. In working out all their various theories, they were rendered every assistance by the inconsolable Mr. du Plessis, but all their efforts were destined to be fraught with failure. And so the weary days and weeks went by, and the "Middelburg murder" seemed destined to be included in the category of undetected crimes.

But among the detectives working on the mystery was one indefatigable, painstaking officer, who was not to be daunted by persistent failure. Again and again he subjected everything connected with the crime to a rigorous examination, and at last his patient efforts were rewarded by something that seemed likely to develop into a clue. At all events it dispelled the almost supernatural air of mystery that clung about the manner in which Mrs. du Plessis came to her tragic end. Minutely examining the pantry one day, this

South African "Sherlock" discovered that the wire netting used as a fly protector on the window had been raised at the bottom edge for two or three inches. On the bars of the window being microscopically examined they revealed the fact that the inside of one of them was slightly scratched, and that the abrasion had evidently been caused by something which had been pushed through from the outside. The clue was immediately followed up, and conjecture at once gave place to certainty.

Mrs. du Plessis had been speared in the throat by a man standing outside, who had plunged his weapon through the window just as she was placing the milk jugs on the ledge to allow the cool air to play about them. Now that the modus operandi of the murderer was discovered, nothing was left to mere guesswork. The detectives made experiments. One enacted Mrs. du Plessis, and entered the pantry bearing a light; another stood in the garden outside the pantry window, through which he tried to reach his colleague with the spear. They found it could be managed easily, and another

common consent as an unsolvable riddle. But the local Sherlock did not sleep. Patiently he bided his time, and one day the whole of South African humanity was staggered by the news that an arrest had been made in connection with the notorious crime.

The police had their grip on one man—was it the man?

The man who was in the hands of the police charged with the wilful murder of Mrs. du Plessis was no other than Charles Petrus du Plessis himself, the husband of the murdered woman! He vehemently protested against the awful accusation, but, nevertheless, he was held tight in the grip of the law till such time as his guilt or the contrary should be proved.

Not only the accused man himself, but all Middelburg protested against the fearful imputation. A man like Du Plessis guilty of murder, and, above all, of the murder of his own wife? Never! The thing was impossible. The police had made some awful blunder. Du Plessis a murderer? No, a thousand times no! Middelburg, in spite of the un-

SHE THREATENED TO LEAVE HIM.

circumstance that tended to render the facility for committing the crime greater was the fact that while the detective with the light was plainly visible in the pantry, his confrère outside, with the death-dealing spear, was perfectly invisible in the darkness. When the blade of the spear was thrust through the pantry window, it was found to be exactly on a level with the victim's neck.

Thus was the method of the crime made patent to all. So far, so good. But the motive? And, above all, the man—the murderer? Days, weeks, months had passed since the fatal night, and what hope, asked everyone, was there of bringing the miscreant to book now?

The Middelburg mystery had caused a profound sensation throughout the whole of South Africa. Not only was the nocturnal spear-thrust talked of to the exclusion of all other topics in Cape Colony, but it formed the subject of many a conversation in Orangia, the Transvaal, Natal, and Rhodesia, and numerous and various were the theories propounded by the amateur 'tecs of the bar-room and market place. Eventually the Middelburg murder was given up by

popularity of Du Plessis amongst the Dutch portion of the community, would not have it. So great was the storm of public feeling, and so fierce the indignation engendered by his arrest, that it was considered advisable to remove the scene of his trial from Middelburg to Grahamstown, and therefore it was in the City of Saints that the next act of this thrilling drama was enacted.

In the court house of the cathedral city a jury of nine (the regulation number in South Africa) was empanelled, and day after day they were made acquainted with one thread after another of the web of ingenious theories and subtle suggestions spun by the prosecuting counsel, and destined to enmesh the unhappy Du Plessis.

The police had done their work well, and with due regard to thoroughness. Not content to accept the deceptive veneer of outward appearances as an indication of perfect serenity reigning within, they had delved beneath the surface and sought to analyse the inner life of the Du Plessis ménage. It behoved them to leave no stone unturned in this direction, for they had taken it upon themselves to arrest a respected

citizen, and to bring against him the awful accusation of having murdered the wife of his bosom. No man in the position of Du Plessis would have committed such a fearful deed without a very strong motive of some kind, and it was the apparent lack of any such motive that led the good people of Middelburg to believe that the police had made a ghastly mistake in bringing this frightful charge against the ex-storekeeper.

Caring nothing for all this public incredulity, the police resolutely set themselves to discover the skeleton which they were convinced was in the cupboard. Their efforts were rewarded. They found that the household of Du Plessis, seemingly so placid and brimful of quiet contentment, was in reality somewhat of a whited sepulchre. It was the old, old story of "cherchez la femme," and in this instance the rift in the lute was provided by a Miss Robinson, a lady shop-assistant for whom Du Plessis had conceived an affection. As a matter of fact, since his wife had met with her awful death, the bereaved husband had allowed her memory to fade to such an extent that he had actually proposed marriage to Miss Robinson. It appeared that Mrs. du Plessis was well aware of this illicit passion of her husband's, and had frequently had cause to remonstrate with him for showing such marked partiality for the girl, who, by the way, occupied a cottage belonging to Du Plessis, and situate near his shop. So deeply had the injured wife taken to heart this preference of her husband's for Miss Robinson that she had on one occasion threatened to leave him unless his attention to the young lady were discontinued.

Mrs. du Plessis was not the sort of woman to say a thing like that by way of an idle jest. She most earnestly meant it, and her husband knew that she would carry out her threat, which would entail an exposé not at all to the taste of the much-respected tradesman. On the other hand, he was devoured by his mad passion for the girl. What was he to do? Torn by conflicting emotions, infatuated by his unlawful love, and intoxicated with desire to possess the attractive object of his misguided passions, he conceived the diabolical plan of rendering himself a free man by murdering his wife! There was another inducement, too, which may have carried no inconsiderable weight in deciding him to compass the death of the unfortunate Mrs. du Plessis, and that was she was insured for the useful sum of £1,000. With this in his possession, and free to marry the girl on whom he had set his heart, he could set up in business in another part of the Colony, and enter on an idyllic life with a wife whom he really loved. Thus argued the deluded man.

The police had left no link of their chain of incrimination unwelded. Du Plessis, said they, was of course well aware of his wife's unfailing nightly peregrination to the pantry with the milk-jugs immediately after the conclusion of the evening meal. He had figured out with cold-blooded, mathematical accuracy that, just as she was in the act of placing the milk-jugs on the window-ledge, her neck would offer an easy target to anyone standing in the garden outside the window and armed with a thrusting weapon. Down at his general store there were to be found always in stock bamboo rods identical with the one used to form the haft of the improvised assegai, knives similar to that which constituted the blade, and red tape of the kind used to fasten the two parts of the instrument together.

From these materials, then, the police alleged, the prisoner had manufactured the fatal weapon. Moreover, as another link in the chain of evidence, they produced a gimlet, which was found in the shop, and in the worm of it were discovered grains of wood which were without a doubt the result of using it to bore a hole in a piece of bamboo. Ergo, argued the police, Du Plessis had utilised this tool to make the hole in the end of the shaft into which the steel blade was fitted.

Keeping this formidable weapon ready for use as soon as a favourable moment should present itself, Du Plessis waited and watched for an opportunity which would allow of his doing his wife to death, and at the same time proving an alibi by the aid of his store. This psychological moment arrived on the evening before the day on which he had to give up possession of the store, and when, fortuitously enough as far as his plans were concerned, Mrs. du Plessis asked him to go down to the store and bring up a hair-comb for her. Leaving by the front door, he slipped round to the garden, and, with his murderous weapon in his hand, waited outside the pantry window until his wife should appear, as she inevitably would, with the milk-jugs. And thus it was that the love of system which was such a marked trait in the character of poor Mrs. du Plessis led her to an awful and untimely death at the hand of the husband who had sworn at the altar to love and protect her while life should endure. Faithful to her nightly custom, she made her appearance at the pantry window, carrying her milk-jugs, and her face brightly illuminated by the glow of the candle in her hand. As she was in the act of placing the first jug upon the ledge the calculating miscreant outside launched his deadly weapon through the little window, and his victim sank to the floor, with the life-blood streaming from her severed arteries. His ghastly purpose accomplished, Du Plessis fled like the wind round into the main road and down the street to his store.

Du Plessis's movements were carefully timed by the police. The man who had been called into the house by the little daughter, and had subsequently run down to the store to carry the news of the murder to the bereaved husband, was positive that it was only when he was close to the store that a light was struck in it.

The hand of justice had also reached out and found two little boys of the village, who said they were passing the house of Du Plessis about the time the murder was committed, and remembered seeing a man dressed in a grey suit run out on tip-toe from the back of the house, and hurry down the road in the direction of the store. As the man bolted

Waited outside the pantry window.

past them they swore that, in spite of the darkness, they recognised Du Plessis.

Many little minor items added weight to the mass of accumulated evidence. A dumb witness, in the shape of the little fox-terrier dog that followed his mistress on her last earthly journey, rendered his quota. It will be remembered that immediately after the consummation of the crime the small terrier was found barking up at the pantry window.

The myrmidons of the law had neglected no shred of evidence that could by any possibility be brought to bear in the balance, and the consequence was an overwhelmingly clear and powerful case for the prosecution.

Notwithstanding this, the trial proved to be the most protracted, as well as the most sensational, that South Africa had ever seen. The good men and true who formed the jury (to the number of nine, as before stated) retired over and over again without being able to come to a definite decision. It was generally understood that eight of the number were convinced of the prisoner's guilt, while the ninth maintained his innocence, and insisted on a verdict of acquittal.

Ultimately, however, the nine jurors filed into the box, and it was intimated that they had agreed upon their verdict.

"Gentlemen of the jury, do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"

And in level tones the foreman answered:

"Guilty, my lord!"

Du Plessis gave a shuddering start, and livid, sweating, and trembling on the verge of collapse, was led away to await the doom he so richly merited.

Sentence of death had been pronounced.

Jealous German Baker Shoots his Rival.

The Bermondsey Love Tragedy.

"But I do hate him as I hate the devil."
—BEN JONSON, "Every Man Out of His Humour," Act I., Sc. 2.

THE catalogue of crimes for which unrequited passion and invincible jealousy have been responsible includes no more lurid item than the tragedy enacted half an hour after midnight in a little baker's shop in an obscure street in Bermondsey on April 22, 1891. The dramatis personæ of this blood-stained episode were all workaday folks whom the ordinary observer would have acquitted of any suspicion of romance. But fact and fiction both declare that all-conquering, all consuming, all-transforming love can metamorphose the most commonplace of men into a hero or a fiend. Be he king or peasant, the man who once becomes passion's slave sacrifices reason and woos destruction in a torturing servitude. Lord Byron, admittedly an expert in this and kindred psychological problems, expresses this opinion in a very pregnant couplet. He writes:

"I have loved—who has not? Yet what heart can declare
That pleasure existed while passion was there?"

The main plot of the Bermondsey sensation was of what the cynic would declare to be the two-men-and-a-woman order, which may be said of most tragedies which stain the pages of the annals of crime.

At No. 49, Lucey Street, in the midst of the Bermondsey tanneries, a comely widow—"who was not young, who was not old, but of a certain age," as Byron hath it—carried on the business of a small bakery. To her personal attractions, which appear to have been considerable, was added the more sordid one that she had a not inconsiderable balance at her banker's. In short, Mrs. Bridget Konrath—for that was the widow's name—was, from both the sentimental and the mercenary points of view, a distinctly eligible party. In the year 1888 Mrs. Konrath, little dreaming of the trouble of which he was to be the central figure, engaged a well-educated and not unhandsome young German of twenty-eight years of age as her foreman baker. Franz Joseph Münch, the young artisan in question, discharged his duties to the entire satisfaction of his employer, and, whether encouraged or not the records do not declare, whilst pursuing the even tenor of his way made the fateful discovery that he loved the widow Konrath. "His heart was," to cite Byron once more, "darkened by her shadow"—a quotation which, by the way, has singular relevancy in this instance, as the sequel will show.

Life had flowed on smoothly and uneventfully enough at the modest bakery in Lucey Street for a little over two years, when there arrived upon the scene a smart young Irishman, named James Hickey. Hickey, who was some three years Münch's junior, was first cousin to Mrs. Konrath. The new arrival at once began to take part in the conduct of the widow's business, and, being a masterful young fellow, soon impressed the German that he considered himself infinitely his superior. It soon became evident, too, to the Teuton that Hickey was a formidable rival for the heart and hand and fortune of Widow Konrath. To do both men justice, neither of them was prompted in the pursuit of his quest by mercenary motives, so far as can be judged from the evidence adducible. Ere many days had passed Münch conceived a bitter hatred for his rival in the lists of love, and Hickey reciprocated the feeling heartily. Neither of them took the smallest pains to conceal their rooted dislike the one of the other. Mrs. Konrath was aware of the condition of things between them, and when one reads the evidence procurable one wonders why she did not dismiss one or other of them from her side. It is, perhaps, hardly fair to conclude that vanity prompted her to retain both rivals in her service. But the fact remains that, although she daily had proof of the bad blood which existed between these men, and could have sent either of them to the rightabout, she forbore to dismiss either of them. Meanwhile, the bad blood was slowly but surely growing worse. Hickey aggravated the situation continually by making disparaging remarks about his German antagonist's nationality, and by flinging at him contumelious allusions to his legitimacy. He lost no opportunity

Persuading Munch to leave the room

to belittle the surly Teuton in the eyes of the woman whom they loved not wisely but too well. Münch, it must be stated, did not take this treatment lying down by any means. Indeed, but for the frequent intervention of Mrs. Konrath, who seems to have been for the most part a business-like, matter-of-fact sort of widow, the tragedy would have reached its dénouement much earlier than it did. Threats to kill had been wrung from the angry young German baker by the foul aspersions cast upon his nation and his legitimacy by the fiery and free-tongued Hickey.

Münch, after long and thoughtful deliberation, determined to put his fortune to the touch, and "win or lose it all." He resolved to declare his passion to the widow, and learn how he stood in her affections. In ardent language he told her how he had loved her almost as soon as he had begun to serve her, and asked her to reward his constancy by uniting her fortunes with his in matrimony. The widow refused to throw her lot in with Münch. From that moment the fate of his rival was sealed. It would have been well for James Hickey if he had at that time taken flight from the scene, or, at all events, resolved not to further goad the young German into madness with unpardonable insults. But Hickey went on his way, reckless of consequences, and

heaped indignity upon indignity on the head of Franz Joseph Münch.

One morning, early in the month of April, 1891, Münch, suffering under some especially aggravating attack by Hickey, said to him, "I see what it is. You want to be boss of this shop. You are not here for a good purpose." This remark should have served as a warning to both the imprudent young Irishman and the too-complacent widow "who stood between." But its premonitory significance was lost upon them.

Hickey replied hotly, "It is just like a dirty, mean, creeping German to think that a man in my position should want to be boss of a paltry shop as this. As for my being here for a bad purpose, I am Mrs. Konrath's cousin, and who has a better right than I have to watch over her interests?"

Münch sneered at this attempt to prove the disinterested character of his attentions to the widow. Fired at last to furious resentment, he denounced Hickey as a fortune-hunter and worse, and warned him of the consequences of a continuance of his vile abuse of him and of his nationality.

clearly indicates the condition of Hickey's mind with regard to Mrs. Konrath; in fact, it shows that not only was he madly jealous of Münch, but that he was determined to reduce his chance with the widow to zero by putting Münch's attentions on a mercenary basis on every possible occasion. The words just cited were spoken in the presence and clearly for the benefit of Mrs. Konrath and for the disparagement of Münch. Still Hickey heedlessly rushed on to his doom.

There does not appear to have been any very open flirtation between the widow and her cousin; but, for all that, their attitude towards each other was one to convince Münch that his rival was first favourite in the lady's affections. Hickey was careful, too, to guide the course of events at No. 49 in such a manner as to create "situations" in which this preference was aggravatingly obvious. Indeed, when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, the wonder is not that the rivalry did eventually culminate in a tragedy, but that the men had not been at each other's throats or engaged in mortal conflict months before the curtain was rung down upon the last act of this love drama in real life.

STAGGERED BACK INTO THE ROADWAY AND EXCLAIMED, "I'M SHOT!"

"Why, you insulting German ——, if it was not for the respect which I have for my cousin here, I would give you a —— good hiding," was the retort of the hot-blooded son of Erin.

Münch was furious. The blood rushed to his head. Mrs. Konrath saw that a deadly struggle was imminent. She stepped between the scowling rivals. There was murder in the heart of one of them. That, surely, was the moment when Mrs. Konrath should have discharged Münch from her service, or, if he was so indispensable to her in the conduct of her business, she should have counselled her lover-cousin to quit the scene. She did neither of these things, whether from fear of precipitating a tragedy or not one can only guess. At all events, she contented herself with persuading Münch to leave the room in which the foregoing angry passages were exchanged. Münch reluctantly obeyed, but vowed vengeance as he retired.

On the next day Hickey renewed his insults and gibes at the "creeping German" and "German ——." He wound up his torrent of abuse by telling him that all he (Münch) wanted was to have his name over the shop. This taunt

This much is certain, if ever a man deliberately courted death James Hickey was that man, for if ever a human being hated his rival with an unquenchable hatred and never by either word or deed concealed the intensity of his hatred that human being was Franz Joseph Münch.

The critical, or, as the cant phrase of the hour has it, the psychic, moment arrived on Tuesday morning, April 21, 1891. Hickey was sitting at breakfast with Mrs. Konrath in a room adjoining the bakehouse. They were chatting with unusual familiarity, and it was pretty evident that the young Milesian was quite satisfied with himself. The door between this room and the bakehouse was open. In the bakehouse Münch was working and—listening. Hickey must have been perfectly certain of the latter fact, and Münch must have felt that the "points" made by the widow's cousin were meant for his consumption. Nevertheless, the hasty Hibernian pursued his wild career of insult and opprobrium. When he had concluded his exchange of familiar nothings with the widow, he snatched up the morning paper, and, scanning it rapidly, concentrated his attention upon a graphic report of the visit of Lord Randolph Churchill to Africa. The

writer of the article made some allusion to the German sympathy with the Boers. How strangely that reads in the light of the tragic subsequent events! Who does not remember the wildly indiscreet birthday congratulations of the German Emperor to the wily and now deceased old autocrat, Oom Paul? Who does not recall the intense sensation which this piece of international imprudence gave rise to? And what Englishman is not proud of the prompt reply which Britain gave to the young man in a hurry? Within twenty-four hours our Flying Squadron was ready for action. But Wilhelm saw his error almost immediately it had been committed, and the amende honorable prevented a conflict the consequence of which would have altered the map of Europe to the point of unrecognisability. But to descend from national to personal consequences of English criticism of the German attitude towards Britain, it is certain that the author of the article already alluded to finally was responsible for the winding up of Franz Joseph to murder-point.

Young Hickey read on and on in silence, until he came upon a denunciation of the policy of the Fatherland's ruler towards this country. This he read aloud to the widow with considerable emphasis and gusto. Hickey achieved his main purpose, which was to enrage the insulted German baker. Said Hickey, who, notwithstanding his nationality, seems to have had a soft spot in his heart for the predominant partner, "I'm glad to see this. These infernal Germans come over here and take the bread out of our mouths, and work for wages on which an Englishman would starve. I hope they are going to get it pretty hot, the creeping hounds." When those words were uttered Münch ground his teeth and screwed his murderous courage to the sticking point.

The meal over, Hickey left the house, and Mrs. Konrath stepped into the bakehouse. After a little while Münch repeated his declaration of affection and again pressed his suit. The widow was obdurate. Then Münch said, "I suppose you know that I heard all that that puppy read to you? I heard his remarks, too, about Germans." Then he added, clenching his teeth, "I'll swing for that fellow Hickey." Later he declared that he would cut his throat. No warning seems to have been given to the doomed man, although anybody acquainted with the condition of the feeling between them could not escape the conclusion that these were no idle words. It transpired during the day that Hickey was about to pay a flying visit to Liverpool on the following day. If his departure had been final he would probably have been alive even unto this day; but Münch knew that he was to return, and, whether or not the thought passed through his distracted brain that absence might make the widow's heart grow fonder of her cousinly compatriot, the aspersed German determined that Hickey should not travel to the great northern seaport. Hickey had made all his preparations for the journey. At a neighbouring hostelry he partook of several parting glasses, and as the night wore on he became decidedly jovial. He left this cosy public-house at closing time, never to re-enter it, and, together with a friend, named Joel Diamond, walked home to the baker's shop in Lucey Street. He opened a private door into the shop, and was in the act of removing the key from the lock, when out of the darkness of the house came a flash and a report. Hickey staggered backwards and fell into the roadway, exclaiming, "I am shot! I am shot!" He was immediately removed to the Lord Palmerston, and medical aid was swiftly procured. Meanwhile, Münch, with wildly flashing eyes, was seized inside the shop. In his right hand he held a smoking revolver, one cartridge in which had been discharged. In his left he brandished a formidable knife. The murderer was quickly disarmed, and, when charged with the crime, said, "Yes, I did it, and a good job. This is love." When confronted with his victim, whose life was fast ebbing away through a hole in his lungs, Hickey just calmly and slowly said, "That man shot me." Münch merely repeated the pathetic sentence, "This is love," and the young Irishman paid the penalty of his preference by Widow Konrath. Whether or not Münch would have left him his life had he refrained from the abuse which aggravated the sufferings of the despised lover we are not here to determine. That the leading motive of the crime was jealousy there is, of course, no shadow of a doubt. That it was intensified by Hickey's language is equally indubitable. At the trial at the Old Bailey, which took place before Mr. Justice Hawkins (the present Lord Brampton), it was admitted by even the prosecution for the Crown that Münch had received a great deal of provocation, but whether it was sufficient to justify him in taking the life of his persecutor was a question which counsel left the jury to decide. The twelve good men and true with very little hesitation found the love-lorn German baker guilty of having done to death with malice prepense and aforethought his hated rival, James Hickey, but accompanied their finding with a strong recommendation to the clemency of the Crown, in consequence of the great provocation on the part of the murdered man. Strenuous efforts were made to procure a respite. Strongly supported petitions were presented. But the Home Secretary could not convince himself that the taunts and jibes of Hickey had been such as justified his slaughter. So the dread sentence of the law was carried into execution, and the poor, distracted German baker died an ignominious death, mainly because he loved a woman whose affections were fixed upon another. Münch's fatal pistol-shot robbed Widow Konrath of both lovers.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Quick Returns.

"WHAT have you to say this time?" asked Mr. Plowden, as he recognised a prisoner who was charged with being disorderly.

The Prisoner: "Really, the fact is, I came out of the Scrubbs yesterday, and, feeling cold, I had a glass."

Mr. Plowden: "I think the time has come when you should be severely punished. One month's hard labour."

The Prisoner: "Thank you!"

Whom He Represented.

SIR PETER EDLIN was once trying the appeals of the London County Council against the assessments of London parishes by the local authorities, when one of the barristers engaged in the appeal against Marylebone arose and said, in a self-satisfied tone of voice, "I represent, m'lud, four lords, four earls——" Here he was interrupted by the laughter of those in court, and when it had subsided Sir Peter, speaking very sharply, said, "You may take that out of your speech. I don't care twopence whether you represent all the dukes in the kingdom."

The Biters Bitten.

A GANG of thieves—four of them—once followed a coach in which was a chemist returning home rather late at night. The men evidently thought the occupant was carrying some valuable property, as he and the driver carried a rather large box from a house and deposited it in the carriage. They therefore determined to annex the box, and when the coach stopped they were on the spot, and as the chemist got out at one side he was pushed down by one of the thieves, whilst the others seized the box and made off with it. The contents were disappointing in many ways. It contained a quantity of pills and other medicinal mixtures, and the thieves, thinking they were some kind of confectionery, partook of them somewhat freely and distributed them among their "pals." The result may be better imagined than described, for the pills went diligently to work, and all who had partaken of them were soon suffering acutely. A doctor was summoned, and he found the thieves in a very awkward predicament. Having heard of the robbery, he informed the police, correctly diagnosing the case as one of "pilfered purgatives." The robbers were arrested, and they turned out to be a gang of very desperate and daring thieves. This was a case in which pills and not police effected a discovery.

Replies to Queries

JOHN AND BILL.—Detectives are recruited from the uniformed men.

ANXIOUS.—The case has not yet been tried, so comment is impossible.

J. T. D.—Both the Billingtons hanged Chapman at Wandsworth Gaol.

NO NAME.—Yes; several fools had their children baptized Charles Peace.

G. L. (Bradford).—Yes; Lipski was a Jew. He was actually preparing his confession when a week's respite arrived.

LIVERPOOL DICK.—1. Calcraft was a gardener, Marwood a shoemaker, Berry sold shoes but did not make them. 2. Bartholomew Binns hanged a few after the death of Marwood.

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